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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SIX IMMERSION STUDENTS AND THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLES

BY

KIM WEBBER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT THEY HAVE READ, AND RECOMMEND TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH FOR ACCEPTANCE, A THESIS ENTITLED SIX IMMERSION STUDENTS AND THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLES SUBMITTED BY KIM WEBBER IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION.

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Dr. B. Jackson

Date: August 30, 1990

DEDICATION

To my parents,

who have always shown me their love and support.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to take an in-depth look at children attending a French immersion early childhood program in order to describe their second language learning experiences with special attention to both the home and classroom environments. The study took place in a satellite community just outside a large urban centre in Alberta. The researcher acted as a participant-observer, gathering information about six children in her own classroom over an eight month period. Subjects were chosen at two entry points, October and January. The October subjects were chosen randomly and the January subjects were selected because of their demonstrated ability to use French spontaneously.

Data was gathered using in-class observation of the children, interviews with parents, and journals kept by the parents of the children's home and outside activities. Recurring themes were established for each child. These themes ultimately clustered into four broad categories: portrait, family experiences, school experiences, and French language development. A descriptive profile of each of the six children is presented as well as a discussion of similarities and differences among the subjects.

Some of the major findings are:

-While all subjects could be considered "successful second language learners", the individual nature of the children's personalities led to individual patterns of French language development.

-The subjects who were more likely to play with the sounds and words of the second language, using what little L_2 they had, had higher levels of oral production than the learners who waited until they could produce whole sentences.

-All subjects were exposed to rich first language experiences in the home which may have contributed to their overall success in terms of French language development.

-The subjects who identified closest with the teacher, and who modelled teacher behaviour, including speech and language, produced the greatest amount of spoken French.

Implications for both immersion teachers and researchers are discussed and the author concludes that if children are not successful in immersion programs as they currently exist, it is the programs which must be changed, not the children.

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It is my sincere hope that I may touch the hearts and minds of my students as these two special people have touched mine.

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CHAPTER 1--INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND BACKGROUND LITERATURE

Virtually all children learn to speak their home language remarkably well in a relatively short time and without any formal teaching (Goodman, 1986; Cazden, 1981). Children arrive at school as competent, creative language learners and users, since for five years they have been learning oral language naturally as they interact with their family and other members of their speech community.

> "At home, children hear speech, are spoken to and practice speaking frequently; they have adult models, functional as well as emotional motivation to learn, and a tutorial relationship with at least one accomplished speaker of the language" (Bissex, 1985, p. 100).

As a French immersion early childhood teacher, I have asked myself how I can introduce my students to a second language by building on the enthusiasm with which they have approached learning their first language. How can I, as a second language teacher, continue the language development which has occurred before children start school and build on the experiences that children have outside the school?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In any second language classroom, there seem to be some students who succeed more than others.

1) What factors affect children as they begin to experience learning a second language in the social context of an early childhood classroom?

2) Is success in an immersion program dependent solely on what goes on in the classroom or do children's home environments play a role in their second language acquisition?

3) How do children use their first language experiences when learning a second?

4) Most importantly, how can educators use the answers to the above questions to design immersion programs which will provide positive second language experiences for the greatest number of students?

It is hoped that this study will make a modest contribution to addressing these important questions.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose here is not to identify a reliable set of predictor factors of second language achievement, but rather to gain a better understanding of the process of second language acquisition in young children.

This study takes an in-depth look at six children attending a French immersion early childhood program in order to describe their second language learning experience. Special attention is paid to both the home and classroom environments. An attempt will be made to describe some individual differences among the children, particularly in terms of first language background.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1) Early Childhood Services (E.C.S.): An E.C.S. program refers to a program for children, parents and staff, with educational goals and objectives, funded by Alberta Education under the Early Childhood Services program, and which makes use of the services provided by a variety of government departments and community agencies (Alberta Education, 1984, p. iii). Children must be at least 4.5 years of age upon entry into the program. In this paper, "E.C.S." will be used interchangeably with "kindergarten", a term more commonly used in other provinces in Canada.

2) French Immersion: a voluntary program intended for children whose home language is one other than French and whose parents believe it to be desirable for them to undergo a large part of their schooling in French. The focus is not on French as a subject but as the medium of instruction for most curricular activities.

3) Early French Immersion: an immersion program offered from the earliest years of schooling, kindergarten or grade 1.

Background literature relevant to the research question will now be discussed. This will include learner characteristics, language learning environment, first language and home background as they have been found to affect second language acquisition.

FRENCH IMMERSION AND

FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN YOUNG CHILDREN

At the end of the sixties, the well-publicized "St. Lambert experience" revealed to educators, and to the general public, a new approach to teaching French as a second language in schools--the immersion program (Stern, 1984). In an immersion program, in kindergarten and in grade one children usually receive their instruction in all subjects in French. Then in grade two or three, English language arts is introduced for one hour a day (Bruck, 1978b). The basis for the design of Canadian immersion programs was that successful second language acquisition occurs in the same conditions thought to promote successful first language acquisition, namely, communicative use of the target language in meaningful, interactive situations (Genesee, 1987).

There are some growing concerns about the effectiveness of immersion programs. In his recent book, Hector Hammerly (1989) explains why he believes immersion does not and cannot work well in the classroom. Hammerly states that although French immersion results in fairly good listening and reading comprehension skills, "after 12 or 13 years of immersion, young people do not speak French but Frenglish, a very incorrect classroom pidgin--a hybrid between limited French vocabulary and mostly English structure--and seem to write only slightly better" (p. 20). Most researchers, however, believe that immersion has generally shown itself to be an effective second language program for students with diverse learner characteristics and from a variety of backgrounds.

Learner Characteristics

Through her work studying children learning English as a second language in the United States, Lily Wong Fillmore (1986) has studied individual variation in second language acquisition. She found that children vary greatly, even during the primary school years, in the ease with which they learn new languages and in the level of control they eventually achieve in them (p. 475). Investigators are now beginning to look toward the learners themselves for more information concerning second language learning (d'Anglejan & Renaud, 1985; Reiss, 1985; Strong, 1983; Weber & Tardif, 1990).

Under the "immersion umbrella", there are a number of types of French language programs, ranging from full immersion, where all instruction is entirely in French, to partial immersion where only a portion of the day is spent in French. The more conventional approach to teaching French as a subject rather than as a means of communication, usually known as CORE French, is quite different from the immersion approaches (Stern, 1984). Immersion programs use French as the medium of instruction rather than as a teaching subject whereas, in CORE programs French is the actual subject matter being taught. None of the major immersion alternatives (early, late, delayed, partial or total) have been shown either to affect negatively students' English language development, (Swain & Lapkin, 1982; Genesee, Polich & Stanley, 1977) or their academic achievement (Genesee, 1983; Swain, 1978). Differences among the alternatives have been found, however, in the domain of second language achievement.

Often, learners with different characteristics are successful in different types of second language programs (Genesee & Hamayan, 1980; Hamayan, Genesee & Tucker, 1977). Programs designed to use naturalistic methods to enhance learners' interpersonal communication skills, immersion for example, may have greater success with a broader range of students than programs oriented toward a more formal, conscious instructional approach (Genesee, 1987).

Student Population:

Participation in immersion programs is voluntary and although they are open to the general public, most programs in Canada serve children from middle class socioeconomic families (Genesee, 1987). Students enrolled in immersion programs do not tend to be representative of the population at large.

Although children generally are not screened before entering French immersion programs, students may undergo unofficial pre-selection procedures which ultimately affect the group population. For example, it may be that parents who are highly interested in their children's education and who are highly educated themselves make up a higher percentage of immersion parents than those who are less well educated and less interested in their children's education. Immersion parents may, on average, be of higher socio-economic status than the general population. They may have travelled more and may be more informed about world affairs. Parents and children who have particular personal, intellectual, or environmental characteristics may choose immersion,

while other parents and children who come with a different set of characteristics may opt for the regular CORE French programs.

The Good Language Learner:

Second language teachers often hold views as to what they believe constitutes a good language learner. Naiman, Fröhlich and Stern (1975) found that teachers most often characterize good language learners as being meticulous, mature or responsible, and self-confident, as exhibiting classroom behaviours of attentiveness, active participation, and regularity in completing homework. Good learners are further believed to demonstrate a good memory, a good ear for sound, and general all-round ability. However, this view of second language learners is often intuitive and unsubstantiated by the research. Moreover, many of the findings of studies investigating the relationship between personality traits and second language achievement are inconsistent (Lalonde, Lee & Gardner, 1987). Some other learner factors which have been examined in the research are cognitive style (d'Anglejan & Renaud, 1985; Genesee & Hamayan, 1980), mental rigidity (Wong Fillmore, 1985), and social and learning style (Wong Fillmore, 1985, 1989).

What is the role of intelligence in second language learning? Intelligence, as measured by IQ scores, is not necessarily the most important variable in predicting second language learning success (Genesee, 1976). Students with below-average levels of academic ability have achieved levels of proficiency in speaking and listening comprehension in French equal to average and above average immersion students (Genesee, 1976, 1978). Students' performance on tests of

academic language skills have been found to vary according to IQ level, but this does not apply to interpersonal communication skills such as listening, pronounciation, vocabulary, grammar and communicativeness (Genesee, 1976; Trites & Moretti, 1986). These findings are particularly relevant to French immersion programs where as much emphasis is placed on interpersonal communication skills as on more formal, academic language skills.

The age of the student may also be a factor in determining whether IQ will have any effect on second language learning ability. IQ seems to be a more important correlate of successful second language acquisition among older students than among younger students (Genesee, 1978). This, again, may be because of the nature of the program. Immersion programs, which are designed to promote second language use at a young age, advocate the acquisition of the target language through its use in meaningful contexts. Programs for older students often rely on a more academic approach, as opposed to natural communication, wherein students with a higher IQ would have a definite advantage.

Affective factors have also been found to be important in second language acquisition (Chastain, 1985; Gardner, 1980). Good language learners have often been characterized as uninhibited (Naiman et al., 1975), highly motivated and as having a positive attitude toward learning the second language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In fact, affective and behavioural problems appear to be the most common reasons for transferring children out of French immersion programs (Bruck, 1985). The fact that immersion programs are characterized by high

levels of parental and student motivation appears to ensure a fairly high minimal level of success (Genesee, 1987).

Integrative orientation is another learner factor which has been found in certain parts of Canada to be relevant to second language acquisition (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Genesee, Rogers, & Holobow, 1983; Gliksman, Gardner, & Smythe, 1982). The integrative motive may be defined as an interest in learning a second language in order to meet and communicate with members of the target language community. However, in studies involving children of kindergarten age, the learners do not seem to be motivated to become a part of the world of the target language group (Strong, 1983; Swain & Burnaby, 1976). This may be because children of this age do not have sufficient knowledge of an other-language community for this to be a contributing factor in their second language acquisition. Results would also be affected by the social context, such as the province in which one lives, the presence or absence of French-speaking family members or the existence of and contact with native speakers of the second language in the child's community. In immersion programs in Western Canada, it is often the teacher who provides non-French children with their only experience with French-speaking Canadians, people whom they might not otherwise encounter regularly in their daily lives.

Students With Special Needs:

The traits identified as being representative of the successful second language learner may be the same traits which characterize good students in any classroom situation. However, parental demand for the

expansion of immersion has caused a less homogeneous enrollment in the program, since students have been included with traits which might cause them to do poorly in school, for example, students with learning disabilities or with first language difficulties. At least as far as the Quebec setting is concerned, Bruck (1978a) suggests that these students do not appear to suffer in terms of first or second language development by being in an immersion setting. Neither is there anything to suggest that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds will meet with difficulty in first language development or that they cannot benefit from immersion as a means of learning a second language (Genesee, 1987).

In a somewhat contraversial study, Trites and his colleagues (1986) found that children who drop out of French immersion because of learning difficulties do well when they are enrolled in an English language program. They conclude that this indicates the children's learning difficulties are specific to the second language program and are not indicative of a primary language or learning disability. Trites' interpretation of the data has been criticized by a number of other immersion researchers. Genesee (1987, p. 89) states that "it is not possible to conclude from Trites' research whether the difficulties experienced by the drop-outs he examined are uniquely characteristic of children who are experiencing difficulty in second language learning or who are just drop-outs; whether or not these students might not have the same difficulties were they in an all-English program; or even whether their difficulties are specific to a neuropsychological disability and not to more general learning disabilities or some other factors".

Learning Strategies:

In contrast to the person-oriented research which examines characteristics of the apparent good learner, others have chosen to use a process-oriented approach focusing on the techniques or strategies used by different groups of learners (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern & Todesco, 1978; Nation & McLaughlin, 1986; Reiss, 1981, 1985; Weber & Tardif, 1988; Wong Fillmore, 1986). Perhaps it is not the amount of input received that distinguishes the better learners but what they do with that input once it is received that makes the difference. Good language learners may make more active, conscious use of the language to which they are exposed.

Individual learners may also have a unique learning style or strategy which works best for them but not necessarily for others. Wong Fillmore (1986) discovered that some children have a greater need than others for meaningful content and activities and that some children, because of their personalities, social and learning styles, and prior experience need more time than others to hear and use the new language in order to learn it. Another interesting finding resulting from studies of learner characteristics in second language acquisition is that not all modes of communication (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) are affected by the same characteristics (Genesee & Hamayan, 1980; Ho, 1987).

Language Learning Environment

Wong Fillmore (1989, p. 280) has identified three necessary ingredients for successful second language learning: LEARNERS who

realize that they need to learn the target language, and are motivated to do so; SPEAKERS OF THE TARGET LANGUAGE who know it well enough to provide the learners with access to the language, and the help they need for learning it; and a SOCIAL SETTING which brings learners and target language speakers into frequent enough contact to make language learning possible. In sum, in order for successful second language acquisition to occur, learners must be engaged in some sort of social relationship with people who speak the target language. All three variables are closely intertwined. For example, children with certain social or personality characteristics may have difficulty handling the social aspect of language learning. Wong Fillmore maintains that those learners who find it easy or desirable to interact with target language speakers will receive more of the social contacts needed for language acquisition than those who are less motivated, or who are less able to manage the kind of social interaction necessary for language learning.

Some of the differences that Wong Fillmore (1989, p. 292) found which affect language learning include the ratio of speakers to learners, the structure of the social situation and the kind and amount of language it invites, the frequency of contact between speakers and learners permitted by the social situation, and the duration and quality of the interactions allowed. It is important, then, to examine the particular language learning environment in which the language learners and target language speakers will interact.

First Language Influence On Second Language Acquisition

For a number of years, investigators have attempted to determine what similarities, if any, there might be between first and second language acquisition. It is possible that there is a common set of learning strategies associated with developing cognitive processes in first-language learners which, in turn, guide the acquisition of the second language (Cain, Weber-Olsen, & Smith, 1987). Learners of a second language begin with a world of prior knowledge and experience obtained through the acquisition of their first language. With a prior language, second language learners have the means to make educated guesses as to what might be said in their L_1 under similar circumstances (Wong Fillmore, 1985, 1989). Learners begin by assuming that speakers of the target language conduct themselves in much the same way as do speakers of their own language in a given situation and thus are able to attach meaningful interpretations to the utterances they hear. Because of their already formed communicative skills in L_1, second language learners will seek to discover means for accomplishing the same functions in L_2.

Virtually all children go through predictable stages of language acquisition (Lindfors, 1980). Alhough there exists a range in rates of development, most children beginning formal schooling can use complex and varied structures to serve them in a variety of situations. In an incredibly short time and in virtually all children, it is language acquisition which tends to develop more quickly than other cognitive functions.

The variation found among first language learners is relatively minor compared to what has been discovered in second language acquisition (Wong Fillmore, 1985, 1989). Some learners become proficient in a second language with the same relative facility as was the case with their first language; others never totally master the second language.

Current linguistic theory postulates the existence of a cognitive mechanism which controls first language acquisition, sometimes referred to as a Language Acquisition Device, or LAD (Chomsky, 1965). However, because of the greater range of individual variation among second language learners than among first language learners, Wong Fillmore (1985, 1989) proposes that while specialized language learning processes, such as those contained in LAD, are likely involved to some extent in second language learning as in first language learning, more general cognitive mechanisms may be involved and to a much greater degree.

Home Influence On Language Acquisition

Imitation is a vital part of learning to speak (Vygotsky,1962) and yet children do not tend to acquire language by repeating exactly what the adults around them say. The most important people in a young child's language environment are his/her parents and it is the parent-child discourse which is at the root of all other language learning. Although consensus has not been reached on exactly how parents affect their children's language development, studies of mother/child talk reveal the extent to which parents support language learning by their words and

actions when they interact with their children (Furrow & Nelson, 1986; Gleitman, Newport & Gleitman, 1984). Simple exposure to language is not sufficient; it is conversation which strengthens communicative competency (Barnes, Gutfreund, Satterly & Wells, 1983; Katz, 1988). Parents typically model language for their children by responding to and shaping the child's utterances (Snow, 1977). However, there are still considerable differences among parents with regard to the way they communicate with their children. Some of the main factors which have been found to determine the way in which parents converse with their children are cultural group (Brice Heath, 1982), amount of education (Della Corte, Benedict, & Klein, 1983), and social class (Bernstein, 1969).

Parents and children engage in a natural kind of communication interaction and may use language which is more complex than that which the child controls. Children's development is a two-way street. They are not only changed by their environment, but also shape and mold it, changing it as well and using it to extend their learning. Children build language out of their own personal experiences which provide an ever expanding base for the content of their utterances. "Language learning is learning how to mean: how to make sense of the world in the context of how our parents, families, and cultures make sense of it" (Goodman, 1986, p. 26). While this may be as true for second language acquisition as it is for first, until now, research on parent/child discourse has been primarily limited to its effect on first language development.

French immersion researchers are beginning to examine the role of parents in their children's progress in a second language program. For example, investigators have questioned whether parent involvement in learning to read facilitates the transfer of reading skills from French to English (Kendall, Lajeunesse, Chmilar, Shapson, & Shapson, 1987). However, the role of parents in the development of a child's oral skills in a second language has been virtually neglected in the research literature.

In this chapter, some of the research pertaining to French immersion and young children's first and second language learning has been discussed. In the next chapter background literature relevant to the methodology employed will be presented, along with a detailed description of both the pilot study and the main study.

CHAPTER 2--RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Glenda Bissex (1986) states that teacher-researchers do not necessarily start out with a hypothesis to test, but with a wondering to pursue. As a researcher who is also a teacher of French immersion kindergarten, I wondered what it was that enabled some children to pick up the second language so quickly while others seemed to have difficulty. It was this wondering that I decided to pursue as a teacher-researcher in the present study.

Researchers and classroom teachers often exist in two separate worlds with little direct communication between them. "The practices of theorizing and teaching often proceed in isolation with members of both enterprises stopping only long enough to lament the gap that seems to exist between them" (Florio-Ruane & Dohanich, 1984, p. 725). The ideal situation may be therefore to amalgamate these two functions within the same person. A teacher-researcher is able to produce knowledge as well as demonstrate its applicability to educational practice (Woods, 1986).

Much of the research in the field of French immersion has been product-oriented (Swain & Lapkin, 1982; Pawley, 1985). A major concern of this research has been how the program has affected pupils' English (Kendall et al., 1987; Simpson & Stewart, 1981) and French (Lapkin, 1984; Pellerin & Hammerly, 1986) language skills. This is not surprising when one considers that, until very recently, the question in the minds of researchers, educators and parents alike was: Does immersion work?

However, Tardif and Weber (1987) call for new perspectives in immersion research: "The success of French immersion education may reduce the necessity in future research to focus exclusively on outcomes, thereby enabling researchers to turn to more process-oriented research" (p. 75). This type of research, however, is relatively scarce. The present qualitative study is based on Bissex's (1986) assumption that a teacher-researcher knows that knowledge can be acquired through closeness as well as through distance, and through intuition as well as through logic.

This project focuses on several individual cases. Case studies have been used to some extent in French immersion research (Swain & Lapkin, 1982; Wiss, 1987), although they are not as common as other, more quantitative studies. Case studies focus on the examination of a particular instance in depth, seeking to determine truths about a unique situation. Like many other qualitative research methods, the case study has yet to reach its full potential. "In a profession where there is basic commitment to the teaching and understanding of the individual child, it is ironic that research devoted to the full study of single individuals is so rare" (Graves, 1975, p. 241).

Attention will be given to the children's oral production in French, for as Genesee (1987) states, there is an emphasis during the initial phase of immersion on the development of oral language and listening comprehension skills. It is generally accepted that what is observed in classrooms, as children listen, speak, read or write, are aspects of their communicative performance rather than their communicative competence.

Weber and Tardif (1990) found a detailed knowledge of classroom program and routines to be vital to the construction and analysis of interview questions which were intended to probe specific classroom learning. Their study of an immersion kindergarten was based on the premise that one can learn much about children's language by becoming an active, informed observer of everyday classroom interaction. In the study reported here, I acted as a participant-observer, gathering information about children in my own French immersion early childhood classroom. Observing children using language in a variety of settings gives a fairer estimate of children's communicative skills than can be obtained from a single test. The teacher-as-researcher is in a good position to hear the children's language within a broader context of experiences, and to connect one day's utterance with an event which may have occurred weeks ago.

PILOT PROJECT

In order to test the research design and methods of data collection for the main study, a pilot project was carried out to investigate the language learning style of a single child. The study was submitted to a University of Alberta ethics review committee and was approved. The subject of the pilot study was Kelly (not her actual name), a five-year-old girl attending a French immersion kindergarten program in a satellite community outside a large urban centre. Her classroom teacher had been asked to select a child who she considered to be a "successful second language learner", that is, someone who demonstrated

a high amount of oral production in French. This was Kelly's second year in kindergarten. The previous year she had attended an English program.

Over a six week period, I observed Kelly in the classroom once a week for two and one-half hours at a time. During the first few sessions, I acted as a totally non-participant observer so that Kelly would become accustomed to the presence of a stranger in the classroom. By the third visit, Kelly seemed comfortable talking with me and I interacted informally with her from time to time in order to get a first-hand view of her use of language.

Open-ended interviews were conducted with Kelly and with her mother and father. The interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed for analysis. Informal discussions were held with Kelly's teacher in order to provide background information as well as a perception check on my interpretations of the data.

Here is a profile of Kelly:

Kelly seemed to cope well with the French immersion kindergarten program. She had little difficulty in completing the tasks she was given and showed strong readiness skills in all domains. She showed evidence of good listening skills, consistently watching the speaker for all possible clues to meaning. Kelly displayed good comprehension skills and was able to follow all instructions given to her in French. She did not exhibit a need for time to decode or translate messages given in French. Kelly demonstrated immediate comprehension by following instructions without delay. Kelly had a lengthy attention span and was not easily distracted while in the middle of a task. She

was able to focus her efforts on what she was doing without outside interference.

Kelly overtly rehearsed many utterances presented by the teacher in French. For example, when told by the teacher, "Monte tes manches, Kelly," she repeated, "Monte tes manches" as she raised her sleeves. She was able to discriminate among speech sounds and to repeat French words with correct pronunciation. She also used a considerable number of words spontaneously in French. Kelly was able to use French words appropriately which had been used previously in class by the teacher, showing good recall for French vocabulary.

Kelly was observed to have a social nature. She talked a lot with other children and with adults. Her English vocabulary was varied and relatively advanced. She is a child to whom language seems important, as she used both English and French for a variety of functions. Kelly acted as if she thought that language was a useful tool and that what she had to say as an individual was valuable. Her need to communicate frequently in English transferred to her use of French.

Some of the ways in which Kelly viewed language may have originated in the home environment. She seemed to be spoken to and listened to frequently, thereby increasing her perception of the value of language in general. She had obviously been made to feel as though what she had to say was important. This communicative awareness had likely been instilled in Kelly by her parents.

I was able to observe Kelly's parents since they had volunteered as parent helpers in the kindergarten classroom. Both parents interacted with Kelly and with other children in the class in a dialogic manner.

They both used a much greater proportion of questions, as opposed to statements, in their conversations with children. They allowed the children to explain things to them and to translate instructions into English when they were given by the teacher in French. Kelly's parents were talkative and had a way of making children feel comfortable when talking with them.

Both of them also attempted to use as much French as they could in the classroom, although neither one of them spoke the language fluently. Kelly's mother would respond to children using one-word utterances such as "Oui," "Bon," or "Merci." Kelly's father had picked up a bit of a number of different languages and showed an interest in other cultures and ethnic groups. He used slightly longer utterances such as "Très bien" or "Qu'est-ce que c'est?" Both parents demonstrated a conscious effort to develop a positive attitude in their children toward other-language groups. At home, they occasionally had "ethnic" meals and talked about people from other countries. Kelly's parents also indicated that they read frequently to their children in English.

While it may not have been a conscious effort, Kelly's parents interacted with their children in a give-and-take manner. They conversed with Kelly, enabling her to practise and refine her communication skills. It is perhaps no wonder, then, that Kelly was capable of actively using French. She had a positive attitude toward verbal interaction in her first language and had been given the encouragement necessary to transfer this attitude to her second language learning.

This pilot study demonstrates the merits of the qualitative case study approach for looking at young children's immersion experience. Anecdotal records and parent interviews proved to be valuable methods of data collection. The study suggested, however, that the child's home environment needs to be examined in more detail in order to gain a broader perspective of the child's language experiences.

RESEARCH METHODS

Using the information gathered through the pilot study, the main study was designed. The project was submitted to a University of Alberta ethics review committee and was approved.

Subject Selection

The subjects were chosen from the students enrolled in the French immersion Early Childhood Education class which I was teaching in a satellite community just outside a large urban centre in Alberta.

Because language development is interactive in nature, an understanding of the part played by parents in both first and second language acquisition is of particular interest. Accordingly, subjects chosen for the study were selected on the basis of the following two criteria:

1) English was the language spoken in the child's home. This was to eliminate possible interference resulting from use of a third language and the fact that the child's mother tongue would not be the language predominantly spoken in the community.

2) At least one of the child's parents was an active helper in the classroom. This was to give the researcher a first-hand view of the parents' communicative and interactional styles with their own and with other children.

Subjects for the study were selected at two entry points.

October 1988: Four children were chosen randomly from those meeting the two criteria listed above. Random selection was chosen because I felt that, owing to the newness of the school experience and the immersion situation, no other reliable criteria could be exhibited by the children during the first month of school.

January 1989: I added two additional children to the study. They were selected because of their demonstrated ability to use French spontaneously. As was illustrated by the pilot study, a classroom teacher has little difficulty in choosing children who demonstrate above-average oral production skills in French at this point in the school year.

Parents whose children were chosen were given the details of the study and an explanation of what would be expected of them if they chose to participate. All of the parents approached agreed to participate and consented to their child's inclusion in the study.

Data Collection

Because language acquisition is a continuous, evolving process, data was collected over a period of eight months. Information was gathered using the following research techniques:

1) In-class observation of children:

I followed McConaghy's (1986) system of "casting out the big net" and continued to teach in my usual way, systematically recording as much as possible of the subject children's ordinary daily activities and behaviour. I did not begin with any preconceived categories, preferring to leave myself open to all that was made available to me as a teacher-researcher.

I kept both systematic and anecdotal records on each child both as the class was in progress, as time permitted, and from memory after the class was dismissed (see Appendix A). I observed children in their regular classroom environment. They were likely unaware that they were being observed. I attempted to record data on each child systematically so that subjects were observed equally in frequency and duration as much as possible. I made a special effort to record observed examples of oral production in French. These records provide a direct means of recording observations and contain enough detail so that an independent reader was able to understand much of what was observed.

2) Interviews with parents:

I interviewed each child's parents twice during the year (see Appendix B). The first interview took place during the first month of

the child's involvement in the study (October or January). The semi-structured interview included questions about the parents' attitude toward and experience with French and the immersion program, home and family background, and the parents' perception of their child.

The second interview took place during the month of May for all parents and included questions about their child's progress and about his/her attitude throughout the year, as well as questions about the parents' involvement in their child's education. The interviews were conducted individually and were audiotaped and later transcribed.

3) Parents' journal of home and outside activities:

Parents were asked to keep records of the activities in which their children were involved during eight one-week periods throughout the year (five periods for late entry subjects). The journals were to document the amount and kinds of activities in which the parents and children were engaged together both at home and in other situations outside school. The parents recorded up to four activities for each day, including a brief description of the activity, the time involved, the participants, and any additional observations (see Appendix C).

Analysis of Data

As Glaser and Strauss (1970) observe, in qualitative work there is no clear-cut line between data collection and analysis. During data collection, I examined anecdotal records and journals periodically and made some modifications to collection procedures. In particular, the parents' journal entries were initially found to be too general and

without focus. After the first month, parents were asked to include two verbatim samples (or as close as possible) of dialogue in which the child was engaged. This adjustment provided more of an emphasis for the data on language development.

All forms of data--observation records, parent interviews and parents' journals--were compiled and synthesized. Through systematic thematic analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1970; Turner, 1981), a list and a description of recurring themes was compiled for each child. The complete data for one subject and partial data for the remaining subjects was also analyzed by an independent reader with a similar educational and teaching background to myself (see Appendix D). My analysis was verified through a comparison of the two independent lists of recurring themes for each child. No major discrepancies were discovered.

Individual profiles were compiled for each subject based on the recurring themes. Subsequently, comparisons and contrasts among the subjects were explored according to each major theme. Although examining individual children is valuable, comparing several children can reveal even more about second language acquisition.

Previous theoretical research was not ignored. My own data and experience were held against related theory in order to see which parts of it were supported by and which parts were opposed by the research. As a teacher-researcher, I have attempted to combine the theoretical and practical worlds in order to learn as much as possible about young children's second language acquisition. Because of my practical teaching experience, I began my study with some questions about how

children learn a second language. However, these questions were more intuitive in nature and not based on any systematic collection of data.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like all research, this study does have some limitations:

1) Parents may not have provided accurate reports of home activities. Some of the parents involved in the study spent more time on the journals and included more detail in their accounts of home activities than others. Thus, direct comparisons were difficult to make.

2) There was a certain amount of conflict in the dual role of teacher/researcher. Daily teaching activities took precedence over recording of observation notes, so a substantial part of the notes was written from memory.

3) Because the two late-entry subjects were chosen as a result of a subjective judgement of their ability to use French spontaneously, findings may have been biased in some way. Because I had already decided that these children were high producers of French, I may have recorded only those data which supported this belief, ignoring data which contradicted it. Although I do not believe that the self-fulfilling prophecy has come into effect, I am aware of the possibility of interference of expectations on analysis of the results.

The findings will be discussed in the next two chapters. In Chapter 3, the recurring themes found upon analyzing the data will be presented, along with a descriptive profile of each of the six subjects.

CHAPTER 3--FINDINGS

LEARNER PROFILES

As the data analysis proceeded, the recurring themes established for each child ultimately clustered into four broad categories: portrait, family experiences, school experiences, and French language development.

RECURRING THEMES

An explanation of the four categories follows.

1) Brief Portrait

This category includes themes relating to general information about the children and their individual character or personality traits. Children have been found to vary greatly in the ease with which they acquire a second language as well as in the level of proficiency which they eventually achieve (Wong Fillmore, 1986), and researchers have begun to study the learners themselves for more information concerning second language acquisition. Some of the types of learner characteristics affecting second language acquisition which will be presented have been previously investigated, for example, personality traits (Swain & Burnaby, 1976), cognitive style (d'Anglejan & Renaud, 1985; Genesee & Hamayan, 1980), and social and learning style (Ho, 1987; Wong Fillmore, 1985, 1989). It is in the brief portrait of each subject that some of these individual learner characteristics will be presented.

2) Family Experiences

This category includes themes relating to the subject's parents and home experiences. Although immersion programs in Canada are open to the general public, most actually serve children from middle class socioeconomic families (Genesee, 1987). It is often assumed that children in French immersion come from homogeneous family backgrounds, particularly with respect to parents' education, socio-economic status and attitude toward their children's education. However, this may not be true. Therefore, family experiences must not be discounted as a constant variable. Even parents of similar socio-economic status have different child-rearing philosophies and expose their children to different types of experiences.

Inclusion of family experiences in this study is important because it is possible that a relationship exists between the process of first language acquisition, which took place in the home, and the process of second language acquisition taking place in the school (Cain, Weber-Olsen, & Smith, 1987; Wong-Fillmore, 1985, 1989). The most important people in a young child's language environment are his/her parents and it is from parent/child talk that all other language learning originates. Although the exact nature of how parents influence their children's language development is unclear, research shows that parents' interaction and conversations with their children positively affect communicative competency (Barnes et al., 1983; Furrow & Nelson, 1986; Katz, 1988; Gleitman et al., 1984).

Children build language out of their own personal experiences, especially those taking place in the family environment. Parental

factors such as involvement in the reading process (Kendall et al., 1987; Mandin, 1982) have been studied with respect to their relationship to second language acquisition. In this study, the category "Family Experiences" will also include characteristics of the parents themselves, the subject's relationship with parents and siblings, and activities the subject engages in with the family or in the home environment.

3) School Experiences

This category includes themes relating to the different ways in which children function in the classroom setting. Although each of the six subjects was in the same class, each encountered a unique school experience.

Good second language learners often have been described as being highly motivated and as having a positive attitude toward learning the second language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). As was mentioned earlier, children are more likely to be transferred out of immersion programs because of affective and behavioural problems than for any other reason (Bruck, 1985). Individual attitudes toward school in general and toward learning French specifically become an important part of the individual school experience.

Wong Fillmore (1989) suggests that in order for successful second language acquisition to occur, learners must be engaged in meaningful social interaction with speakers of the target language. In the French immersion kindergarten program, the teacher is the main source of L_2. According to Wong Fillmore, the children who are more willing to

interact with the teacher will receive more of the social contact needed for language acquisition than those children who are less motivated or less able to engage in the social interaction necessary for language learning. Each of the subjects in this study interacted with the teacher in a slightly different manner and these differences in student/teacher relationship also make up the individual's school experiences. It is therefore important to examine the particular way in which the teacher and students interact. The category "School Experiences" will include the subjects' attitude toward school, their relationship with the teacher, and activities they engaged in unique to the classroom situation.

4) French Language Development

This category includes themes relating to the subjects' use of French. There are likely great individual differences among the learning strategies students use to acquire a second language, and researchers have only begun to examine the techniques and strategies used by different groups of learners (Naiman et al., 1978; Nation & McLaughlin, 1986; Reiss, 1981, 1985; Weber & Tardif, 1988; Wong Fillmore, 1986). Certain learning strategies may produce better results in terms of second language acquisition. Children's individual personalities and learning styles may produce a need for certain types of activities which work best for them but not necessarily for others (Wong Fillmore, 1986).

The category "French Language Development" includes the situations and ways in which the subjects use French. The individual learning

styles of the children will be described in terms of their relationship to second language acquisition.

DESCRIPTIVE PROFILES

The descriptive profiles will be followed by a discussion of similarities and differences occurring within each category with respect to French language development. The names of those involved in the study have been changed.

Joel

Joel was a randomly chosen subject and thus was involved in the study for an eight month period.

Brief Portrait:

Joel is a very social child. He is more likely to be playing with others than alone, and his mother admits that "there's hardly a day goes by that he hasn't been with one of the neighbour's kids."

Joel is also an extremely verbal child and talks easily with both children and adults. While playing, he keeps up a running monologue or dialogue and when conversing with adults he asks numerous questions. This monologue took place in the block centre at school where Joel was playing with one boy and one girl.

Boy:
I'm making a ghostbuster trap.

Joel:

No, that's not the way you make them. I'll make them. Babies come back, there's ghosts over there. Angie, I don't want to say it. You can't make me say it. Say the tractor was driving by itself.

He pulls the tractor away from the girl and she lets him take it away from her.

Joel:

You know what? This guy launched a bomb.

He drops a block on the tractor and then drives a truck around making motor noises.

Joel:

Let's say you came out. Say those two died since everybody ran over them. Their machinery was all smashed up.

Because of Joel's curiosity, short activities at home often drag out to be lengthy projects with all the questions he asks. The following conversation took place at bedtime between Joel and his mother.

Joel:

Mommy, I hope no aliens come to our world.

Mom:

Why not? They might be good and help us.

Joel:

But they might be bad and destroy us.

Mom:

Maybe if they are smart enough to travel in space, they will also be smart enough to be peaceful.

Joel:

Can we travel to other worlds?

Mom:

Not yet.

Joel:

Why not?

Mom:

Because other planets are so far away that we haven't figured out how to get there fast enough so that people can live during the trip and we don't have spaceships that can carry enough fuel.

Joel:

But they do it on T.V.

Mom:

T.V. is pretend stories that some people think up and actors act out, just like you pretend.

Joel:

Are ghosts real?

Mom:

I don't know, now how about listening to the rest of the tape and then sleeping.

Joel likes to teach and explain things to others. For example, when in the story corner with another boy, Joel first chose a book about pandas and then reached over and took the boy's book away saying, "Gimme that. I'll show you Mark." They looked for a picture of whales and then Joel found the page. He said, "Look--fish and whales," and then went back to the beginning of the book and turned each page.

Joel has a baby brother and sister at home, eighteen-month old twins. He spends a lot of time with them and tries to teach them new games and "proper" behaviour.

Joel shows extreme interest in commercial toys and talks often about the things he has or wants. Much of his dramatic play at school is based on "Ghostbusters" or "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles".

Family Experiences:

Joel's father works for Air Canada and owing to the frequency with which he has been transferred, his family has made numerous moves throughout the country.

Joel's mother is a homemaker and it is she who spends time helping out in the classroom. Joel does not cling to his mother when she is in the classroom, neither does he demonstrate jealousy of the time she spends with other children. He carries on with his regular activities independently of her. When working in the classroom, Mrs. B. makes an effort to converse with the children as much as possible. She tries to

use what little French she knows and is also keen on learning more when she can. Her use of French also extends into the home environment. As we saw in the bedtime conversation she had with Joel, Mrs. B. encourages Joel to talk, to question, and to explain. She dialogues with her son and encourages him to converse with her.

Joel's parents are very family-oriented. According to the log kept by parents, they enjoy numerous activities together as a family. They might watch television together or play with toys. They seem to spend a lot of time in shopping malls, a fact Mr. and Mrs. B. attribute to the need for indoor activities with the babies.

Joel's parents read to him frequently. Joel often reads and writes himself, sounding out the words. However, this is an activity that he does not show an interest in doing at school. Joel also likes doing crafts at home, another activity he does not particularly enjoy at school. He engages in a fair amount of roughhousing and physical play at home. Again, this type of behaviour is unlike his attentive, well-behaved comportment in the classroom.

Joel and his parents talk a lot about school and about French words he has heard. However, if he is pushed to talk about school events, he will often keep silent. Joel often helps, or tries to help his parents with chores around the house and enjoys doing it. Joel spends time alone with each of his parents, but finds time with his dad particularly special.

Joel's parents insist on his demonstrating good manners and will discipline him when necessary, whether privately at home or in public.

In one of her journal entries, Mrs. B. recounted an incident where Joel had been spanked in a store for being rude to a cashier.

School Experiences:

Joel's parents attest to the fact that he loves school. Joel participates willingly in all large group activities and is especially enthusiastic about library day. Judging from the frequency with which he chooses to play there, one of Joel's favorite learning centres is the block centre.

During whole class listening activities such as stories or discussions, Joel's attention is often elsewhere. He often looks around the room or talks with one of the children sitting next to him. However, as the year progressed, Joel's ability to concentrate and focus on a speaker improved greatly.

French Language Development:

Joel is very enthusiastic about learning French. In fact, he sometimes tells his neighborhood friends who are in English programs that his school is better than theirs because he gets to learn French. Joel sometimes repeats a single French word over and over once he has heard it. He also mixes single French words or expressions in with English words.

Joel sings French songs and uses French words often at home. He enjoys sharing them with his parents and Mrs. B. continually expresses her amazement at Joel's use of French. Joel's parents try to expose him to French outside of school, for example, by buying him French records.

They also have some friends who speak French and Mr. and Mrs. B. have asked them to use it with Joel.

About mid-year, Joel underwent a decline in production of French words at school. It increased again toward the end of the year. A similar circumstance occured in Joel's use of French words at home. His mother attributes this to the novelty of the second language wearing off.

Amanda

Amanda was a randomly chosen subject and was involved in the study for an eight month period.

Brief Portrait:

Amanda is a friendly and easy going child. She talks easily with adults in the classroom and also in the community. Amanda engages in frequent dramatic play. Some of her favorite home activities are dressing up or playing with dolls. At school, she often chooses the house or puppet centres. Amanda often pretends to be the teacher, using her younger brother or other children in the class as her students. She usually goes through some of the large group routine activities such as the calendar or weather when she is "teaching".

Amanda's language is quite precocious and dramatic. She often uses words and expressions one normally hears only adults use. She speaks frequently in a mature, grown-up voice. Amanda focuses more on oral communication skills than on other modes of communication. That is, she

expresses herself more frequently through speech rather than through print, art, body movements, etc.

Family Experiences:

Amanda's parents are Anglophones from Quebec who still have many family members living there. Their past experiences with the French language and their intention to return to Quebec someday are the cause of much of their motivation to put Amanda into French immersion. Amanda and her family visit Quebec frequently and have contact with both French and English-speaking relatives.

English is the primary language of Amanda's home. However, since Amanda started kindergarten, her parents speak French at home quite often with her, although conversations usually consist of both French and English sentences. Prior to that time, French was used more as a "secret" code by Mr. and Mrs. C. for discussions they did not want to share with their children.

Amanda showed strong and consistent, spontaneous use of French in school throughout the year. Her parents stated that she was somewhat unaccepting of her parents speaking French to her at the beginning of the school year but that she became increasingly tolerant as the year progressed. Amanda demonstrates no difficulty comprehending conversations in which both languages are used.

Amanda's mother has worked as a teacher aide in a French immersion E.C.S. class in the past and has presently gone back to college to take a teacher aide course. Both of Amanda's parents participate relatively equally as parent helpers in the classroom. During these occasions,

they often speak French to the children. Amanda's parents have stated several times that they feel she is quite bright.

Amanda has an older brother who is fifteen and an older sister who is sixteen. They perform many of the caretaking duties at home. Amanda's sister accompanies the class on some field trips and tries to use some French on these occasions.

Amanda's family does not spend a lot of time at home. Mrs. C., especially, is out a lot. There seem to be a lot of different people, such as family members, babysitters, relatives and friends, who are in and out of the house all day. Dinnertime is an important family time in Amanda's family. It is a time when everyone gets together and shares what has gone on during his or her day.

Amanda is read to frequently at home. Books are usually read and then discussed. During these and other discussions, Amanda's mother often questions or quizzes her in a teacher-like manner.

French Language Development:

Amanda is one of the children in the class who produces the highest number of French words. She showed strong and consistent, spontaneous use of French in school throughout the year. She repeats many teacher utterances spoken in French. The following conversation between Amanda and myself occured during a small group activity where children were to cut and glue a series of pictures of dolls in order according to size.

Amanda (to the other children):
These are fille...(to me)...What's doll?

Teacher:

C'est une poupée.

Amanda:

Une poupée?

Teacher:

Oui.

Amanda:

Poupée, poupée, poupée...

Amanda often uses French spontaneously, especially when answering questions to which a choice of answers is given. She often uses French words within an English sentence. The following took place on the bus on our way home from a field trip to the farm. Amanda's older sister was along and they decided to sing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm." They sang a few verses and then Amanda said, "I know one but it's in French. And on his farm he had a cochon."

Amanda sometimes pretends to speak French using a mixture of actual French words and nonsense sounds spoken with a French accent and intonation. She does this both at school and at home.

Kyle

Kyle was a randomly chosen subject and was involved in the study for an eight month period.

Brief Portrait:

Kyle is a rather intense and serious child. In large group activities such as stories or discussions, he listens attentively, his eyes focused on the speaker. He has some very intense facial expressions. In fact, there are times when one can almost see the wheels turning in his mind as he concentrates so hard. Kyle has an excellent memory and can repeat stories, names of people or French words, after having only heard them once or twice.

Kyle is a competitive child and likes to be first, whether in playing a sport, doing a project in school, or standing in line. He is a natural organizer and leader of other children. In a play situation, it is Kyle who will choose what he and his friends will play. When engaging in dramatic play, he will set the scenario and the others will play within the framework he has set up.

Kyle is a perfectionist and can get quite upset when he makes a mistake. Rather than guessing the answer to a question and risking being wrong, he will wait to answer until the question becomes routine, and he is certain of the response. Kyle generally tries his best in whatever activity he is doing. The exception to this is that he often scribbles when doing a project where coloring is involved.

One of Kyle's most frequent choices of activities is listening to music and story tapes.

Family Experiences:

Kyle's parents have travelled internationally and have lived in a number of different countries because of the location of Mr. K's

employment. Kyle, in fact, was born in Singapore. There exists the possibility of a future transfer overseas for Kyle's family.

Kyle's parents feel that a knowledge of other languages is good for their children and that knowing French will help Kyle with travel and employment later on in life.

Many of the games Kyle plays at home are very active. He loves playing outdoors. His family frequently plays sports together and Kyle is involved in extracurricular sports--soccer, skating and swimming. Another favorite activity is watching cartoons and other television programs.

Kyle's parents read to him often and he enjoys retelling a story which has been read to him. He will usually have it memorized word for word after hearing it only a few times. Kyle works on math problems and printing at home with the help of his parents. However, this interest in written work does not carry over into the school environment. Kyle spends a lot of time with each of his parents but according to the interview with Mr. and Mrs. K., he especially values the time he has with his father.

Kyle has a three-year-old brother and spends much of his time at home playing with him. They engage in many active games together such as hockey or bicycle riding. Kyle also teaches his younger brother many of the things he knows, including French words. Here is an account written by Mrs. K. of an activity with took place between Kyle and his younger brother Lorne:

"Kyle put the tape on for his brother and gave him instructions how to work the tape deck and when to turn the page when the bell rang. Kyle became very angry when Lorne would not listen. His patience was very short today. The comment is from Kyle, 'You never listen Lorne!' Some of his comments sound just like his Mother's!!"

French Language Development:

One of Kyle's earliest and most consistent French utterances was numbers. His counting is almost always in French. For example, one day during the month of November, while lining up with the class to go to the library, Kyle suddenly began counting all of the children's mailboxes in French. He subsequently counted them in English.

Kyle occasionally repeats teacher utterances in French, as in the following situation where half the class was doing a project with me in the hallway:

Teacher:
Asseyez-vous ici ou ici (pointing to the two places).

Kyle:
Ici ou ici...ici ou ici...(he repeats continually)

Most often, Kyle translates into English instructions which I had given in French. He repeats these aloud, perhaps for the benefit of the other children in the class.

Kyle seldom mixes French and English in the same utterance. He generally waits until he is certain of giving a complete and correct response in French before using any French at all. Kyle showed some

spontaneous use of French at the very beginning of the school year but this use dropped markedly until the last third of the year. In this latter part of the school year, the frequency of Kyle's spontaneous utterances in French rose dramatically.

Kyle sometimes sings French songs on his own but seldom uses French words unless asked specifically to do so. His mother encourages him somewhat insistently to teach her the French words that he knows. This often seems like somewhat of a quiz. She attempts to get him to give her a new French word each day.

Linda

Linda was a randomly chosen subject and was involved in the study for an eight month period.

Brief Portrait:

Linda is a quiet and very well-behaved child. She has a speech impediment and has considerable difficulty pronouncing a number of sounds. Linda sees a speech therapist regularly and is making progress.

Linda possesses a good understanding of print and is beginning to decode printed words. At home, she attempts to read some of the words in stories her parents read to her. At school, she is able to read the names of all of the children in the class.

Linda has excellent fine motor skills and spends much of her free play time coloring, drawing and making things. She engages in frequent dramatic play with sisters and friends at home and with friends at

school. Linda especially likes dressing up, playing house and playing with dolls.

Linda gets along well with other children but prefers to have one best friend with whom she spends most of her time rather than a number of different friends. As the year went on, Linda grew from a quiet, introverted child into a more talkative and social child.

Family Experiences:

Linda's parents are involved in several educational support committees. Mrs. T. is very active in the Canadian Parents For French organization (C.P.F.). The family generally participates in cultural activities sponsored by C.P.F. Mrs. T. is also a member of the Local Advisory Committee, a parent support group for the E.C.S. program. Mr. T. was not directly implicated in either of these organizations but stated he was more involved in his children's education in the home environment, for example, helping them with their homework.

Linda's parents are not exclusively concerned with their children learning French. They emphasize the importance of learning, regardless of the subject matter.

Linda has an older sister, Carla, who is in grade two French immersion. According to her parents, Carla is experiencing a certain amount of difficulty in school in general and specifically with the French language.

Linda's family frequently spends time together at home. Mrs. T., in particular, spends a lot of time playing with her children. Linda enjoys physical play such as skating, swimming, tobogganing, dancing and

bike riding. She usually participates in these activities with her parents and/or sisters. Linda's family also frequently plays table games such as cards or board games. Linda and her sisters are often read to by their parents. Other frequent home activities for Linda are watching television or playing with blocks.

School Experiences:

Linda is attentive and well-behaved during large group activities. She seldom volunteers answers in class but will answer when asked directly.

Linda often plays independently at school and generally chooses play areas without regard for where certain other children are going. Linda especially enjoys the writing centre where she makes stories in her writing book. These mainly consist of pictures with some teacher-printed labels.

French Language Development:

Linda's French language use tends to parallel her English language use. She is not extremely verbal in either language. However, by mid-year Linda was using single-word utterances in French. In one instance, the children were asked to draw a picture about something they saw on a field trip to the museum. When they finished, I asked them to tell me what their picture was about and printed the sentence on the page. After I had printed Linda's sentence she quickly said, "Merci!" and went to put her book away.

It was only occasionally that Linda used longer French utterances spontaneously. For example, one day Linda and I were playing a game she

had made up which was similar to the card game "Go Fish". Linda held all of the cards with pictures of animal babies on them and I had the cards with their mothers on them. She proceeded to ask me questions such as: "Où est le turtle?" and "Où est le tiger?" For the first few questions she used the English word for the animal name. She then switched to the sound the animal makes, for example, "Où est le woof-woof?"

Angela

Angela was chosen in January because of her demonstrated ability to use French spontaneously in her speech. She was thus involved in the study for a five month period.

Brief Portrait:

Angela is a kinetic child. She is almost always physically active--jumping, wiggling, etc. While sitting in a large group listening situation such as storytelling, she often swings her head or arms around. She is also physically affectionate and demonstrates this by frequently touching, kissing and hugging those around her. Angela seems to have a positive self-concept and a lot of confidence in her ability to do things. The following conversation took place after Angela and her mother had watched a news program featuring a flood and after Mrs. H. explained what a flood was.

Angela:

Mom, what if a flood was coming to our house.

Mom:

Well I guess we'd go upstairs and on to the roof.

Angela:

I know--I'd pick Beth up and put her on my bed.

Mom:

That's an idea.

Angela:

I'd save her--then I'd be a hero. And you'd have a hero party for me!

Mom:

We'd be happy to do that.

Angela:

Yup--I'd save you, Beth, Janet and Daddy too.

Angela's parents report that she likes to do things for herself, by herself. In the journal, Mrs. H. described a day when Angela made breakfast for herself. She toasted the waffles, checking every step with her mother: plugging in the toaster, getting the waffles, toasting them, and putting on butter and syrup. Mrs. H. remarked that Angela "felt quite an accomplishment upon finishing everything".

Angela is an inquisitive child and asks questions about all sorts of things. The following conversation took place while Mrs. H. was doing Angela's hair:

Angela:

Mom do spiders live in dirty water?

Mom:

Well some do I suppose.

Angela:

Well, where do they live then?

Mom:

In cracks in the walls, some drains. Some spiders like water--some like sand.

Angela:

Cracks in the sidewalk too. I saw one once.

Mom:

And what happened?

Angela:

I ran away--I was at Carol's house.

While playing with her sisters or friends, Angela often takes on the role of leader. She will play the teacher or mother taking care of the others. Angela does enjoy playing with others but also values her quiet times alone. One of her favorite activities is looking at books. She will often say part of the story or sound out some of the words.

Family Experiences:

Angela's parents are concerned about her emotional well-being. It is extremely important to them that Angela enjoy school.

Angela has two younger sisters with whom she plays frequently. Mrs. H. spends a lot of time alone with Angela or together with all three girls. Angela also has an aunt, uncle and cousins a few years older than herself who live in the same city. The two families spend a fair amount of time visiting one another.

Angela is allowed to make many choices and decisions at home. She also helps out with a number of household tasks and especially likes to cook.

Angela enjoys doing crafts and is extremely creative. She has access to a wide variety of materials at home--construction paper, scissors, glue, paint--and uses them often. Angela engages in frequent dramatic play and especially enjoys pretending she is a teacher. She also dramatizes with smaller manipulative toys such as "Barbies" or "My Little Ponies". Angela likes to watch television and gets very absorbed by it. In fact, this is one of the few situations in which she will sit still for any length of time. Her mother confesses that they "don't let her eat by the T.V. very often--as it takes forever to finish a meal".

School Experiences:

Although Angela enjoys playing with other children, her friendships are quite flexible. She demonstrates more of a tendency to play with whoever is in close proximity to her rather than seeking out specific children with whom she wants to play.

French Language Development:

Angela uses many French words spontaneously in school and does not hesitate to use French words in the middle of English sentences. For example, one morning, as the children were arriving, the following conversation occured:

Teacher:
Angela, va chercher tes souliers.

Angela:
I have two souliers here (meaning two pairs of shoes between which she could choose).

Angela shares many of the French words and songs she knows with her parents, especially with her mother.

Angela talks a lot about the similarities and differences between the French and English languages. She seems to have a highly developed metalinguistic awareness and an interesting way of accomodating the two languages. One day Angela had just finished a project on which she was writing her name. She began erasing it and I went over to see what the problem was. She had printed her name using all upper-case letters and, as she had been corrected before, knew she had not printed it appropriately. Angela turned to me and asked, "How do you make an 'n' in French?" She seems to think that 'ANGELA' is her name in English, the way she learned to print it at home, and 'Angela' is her name in French, the way she prints it at school. Angela likely associates each language with a particular place--home or school--automatically

attributing discrepancies in language or spelling used at home and at school to English/French language differences. Throughout the year Angela developed an increasing awareness of what it means to learn a second language and to be in a French immersion program. At least, she is able to verbalize her reflections about second language acquisition.

Katie

Katie was chosen in January because of her demonstrated ability to use French spontaneously in her speech. She was thus also involved in the study for a five month period.

Brief Portrait:

Katie is a very verbal child, talking and singing a lot to others and to herself. She is extremely strong-willed and will try almost anything in an attempt to get her own way. She argues habitually with her parents and teachers. The following dialogue took place between Katie and her mother just before school on a day the class was going skating.

Mom:

So you get to go skating today.

Katie:

Oh goody, Mom. Do we go all day?

Mom:

Yes, for your class--you'll be home same time.

Katie:

O.K., I'll go get my stuff.

Mom:

The note said you have to wear helmets and ski pants.

Katie:

Ahh--Well I'm not going then.

Mom:

O.K.

Katie:

I'll put my "No Bus" sign out.

Mom:

O.K., thanks.

Katie actually did stay home from school that day. However, she is not always successful at manipulating the significant adults in her life.

Katie is rather bossy and often attempts to discipline and direct either the other children in the class or her brother and sister at home. She likes to explain to others how to do things she already knows how to do. Katie likes to be able to do things other children cannot do so that she can be in the limelight. This includes her above-average ability to express herself in French. When asked how she would describe Katie's attitude toward learning French, Mrs. S. answered, "I personally think she finds it...I think for her the French part is very enjoyable. She enjoys having a skill that maybe some others don't have."

Family Experiences:

Katie's parents do not speak much French but they use what they do know at home and, in Mrs. S.'s case, in the classroom. For example, when it was Katie's father's birthday, the family sang "Happy Birthday" both in English and French. However, Katie's father still feels frustrated over his inability to speak French, as he expressed in one of the interviews:

"I think that's probably the...fact that Teresa has some idea [of French], took a bit of it in school...It kind of makes you feel a bit helpless,...I don't really know anything about where you want to try and help them. So you do it just by picking up on a little bit, but I'll bet you my French is probably improved 100% over what it was...from zero. I mean, I can understand some basic phrases and stuff now and if I could be a little more educated, I'm sure I could make them [the children] more productive...It'll come in time I guess."

Katie's parents repeatedly express their concern about whether children enjoy school, French, or various other activities. On one occasion, Mrs. S. stated:

"She really seems to be enjoying French immersion and I think both of us feel the same way...As far as the program goes, I agree with it, but if there ever came a point where they weren't enjoying it anymore, were really having difficulty in it, it wouldn't bother me one way or the other [if they dropped the program]. I don't think they're behind

in the English part of it that much. I think they enjoy the program in general."

Katie's parents often measure the success of a particular activity by their children's enjoyment.

Katie continues to act the teacher role at home as she plays school. The student(s) may be her younger sister, a friend, a doll or an imaginary friend. Katie engages in frequent dramatic play, both at home and at school and usually takes on the adult or authoritative role. She will often be scolding or disciplining.

Katie has an older brother who is in grade two French immersion. She is often in conflict with him and likes to compete with him on an equal level, even though he is two years older than she is.

There is a lot of discussion at home about what Katie and her brother have done at school. This is a prime opportunity for Katie to teach her parents things they do not know (such as French words), something she likes to do. Katie's parents, and especially her father, frequently read to the children at home. Another one of Katie's preferred home activities is helping her mother with tasks around the house, especially baking or cleaning.

School Experiences:

Katie consistently mimicks me in my role of teacher. She often repeats what I have said to other children. For example, during show and tell time when children are asking questions to try and guess what the item is, I will usually repeat the questions in French. Katie frequently repeats the French question one more time or even asks it

before I do. She also frequently takes it upon herself to keep the other children in order by reminding them to be quiet, to hurry up, etc. It is thus not difficult to understand that Katie has trouble getting along with her classmates. She sometimes complains about other children not liking her or not allowing her to play with them.

Katie has developed an awareness of the meaning and uses of print. She often "pretends" to read by telling the story while turning the pages of a book. She usually uses a mixture of French and English. Katie almost always turns the book away from herself, toward imaginary or real listeners, another example of the way she continually takes on the teacher role. She also communicates frequently through writing, generally in English.

French Language Development:

Katie is one of the most frequent and spontaneous users of French in the classroom. She often uses one or two French words within an English sentence, as in this conversation with myself:

Katie:

What color is that? (pointing to my eye shadow)

Teacher:

Gris.

Katie:

Why don't you wear bleu?

Teacher:

Je n'ai pas de bleu.

Katie sometimes uses French words she knows in the place of French words she does not know, even if it does not make sense, as in this example of Katie singing the clean-up song.

"Ramassons nos affaires
Un peu d'ordre s'il vous plaît.
C'est la seule manière
Qu'on peut danser les affaires."
(word should be trouver)

Katie seems to have a good auditory memory. She attends closely to what I say and is able to repeat French words without having to hear them frequently. While mimicking me, Katie usually speaks French, the language of the teacher, or at least a mixture of French and English.

Katie enjoys singing and frequently sings French songs outside of school, either alone or with family members. She often shares French words or songs she knows at home.

Dad:

So Missy--how was your day?

Katie:

Fine Dad, listen--I'll sing a French song OK?

Dad:

OK--shoot.

Katie:

Bonjour mes amis, bonjour...(she sings the song)

Joanne, Katie's younger sister, starts singing along.

Katie:

Joanne--I'm singing it to Dad, not you.

In this chapter, the findings were discussed in terms of the individual children. In Chapter 4, comparisons between the subjects will presented in each of the four broad categories of recurring themes.

CHAPTER 4--FINDINGS

COMPARING THE LEARNERS

While the previous chapter focused on describing each individual, this one will compare the learners.

LEARNER SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The profiles of the six children have revealed six distinct personalities. The individual nature of the children's personalities led to individual patterns of French language development. However, there are also some similarities among the children with respect to second language acquisition.

Verbal Ability

Amanda and Katie, the most verbal of the six children in their first language, were also the most verbal in their second. In contrast, Kyle and Linda, the quieter children, carried this trait over into their second language as well. Yet even these less verbal children became more talkative as the year progressed. Verbal ability in French seems to parallel the same ability in English.

Linda is the only subject with a speech problem in her first language. She has difficulty articulating a number of specific sounds. This does not seem to affect her ability to cope in a French immersion program. She may be slightly more reluctant to speak out in front of others in either or both languages because of her inability to pronounce

certain sounds but her comprehension of the French language is definitely not affected. In one instance, Linda was alone at the painting centre and had painted a picture of two hearts. I approached her to talk to her about her painting:

Teacher:

Qu'est-ce que tu peinture, Linda?

Linda:

A heart.

Teacher:

Et quelle couleur sont tes coeurs?

Linda:

Pink.

She responded to each question immediately, indicating comprehension, even though she did not answer in French. This finding supports the work of Bruck (1978a), whose research indicates that children with language disabilities can benefit from and learn in French immersion programs.

Leadership Qualities

Kyle is a natural organizer and leader of other children. He is a child to whom other children are intuitively drawn. They seem to trust his decision-making ability and allow him to direct their play. While Angela also possesses these same types of leadership qualities, they

tend to be more prevalent in the home environment. In contrast, Katie attempts to take charge of other children, but without as much success because they view her as being "too bossy," rather than as having good ideas. In the context of this study, the relationship between leadership qualities and successful second language acquisition seems vague and indirect at best.

Social Interaction

There were varying degrees of social interaction among the six subjects. Joel is a very social child, who spends most of his time with other children. Angela and Linda, on the other hand, do not have as wide a circle of friends and may spend a great deal of time playing alone. They make their decisions about what and where to play independently of their peers. The social nature of the children did not seem to be directly related to their second language use in this study.

Inquisitiveness

Angela and Joel have the greatest tendency to ask questions of adults, especially the infamous "why?" The other children were less prone to continual questioning. In this study this trait did not seem to be necessarily related to French language development or verbal ability in general, as Amanda and Katie, also highly verbal, tend to produce more didactic utterances than questions. A predisposition to pose a high proportion of questions may be more indicative of the type of conversations encouraged by the children's parents than of their ability to use oral language effectively.

Attentiveness

Kyle and Linda are focused listeners; their eyes are directed to the speaker and their bodies are held relatively still. In contrast, Angela and Joel tend to be more kinesthetic children whose bodies are continually in motion. They are able to absorb what is going on even though an observer may assume they are not paying attention. They have multiple focus at any given time. The other two girls--Amanda and Katie--are somewhere between the two extremes.

Stephen Krashen (1981) states that it is natural acquisition and not conscious learning which is responsible for fluency in a second language, the ability to use it easily and comfortably. This is consistent with the findings of this study when one compares the unconscious acquisition of French of Katie and Amanda to the conscious learning of Kyle. Katie and Amanda have much higher levels of oral production of French than Kyle. In this study, the way in which the children attend to a speaker does not appear to be exclusively related to success in second language acquisition. It may be linked more to individual learning style or the way in which the children learn, rather than the result or what they learn.

Memory

Kyle and Katie demonstrate a good auditory memory. This applies not only to French vocabulary but to stories, names of people, etc. A good memory may be necessary yet not sufficient for high oral production in French. The difference between these two learners is that in Katie's

case, she remembers a large number of French words and goes on to use French spontaneously. Kyle, on the other hand, will produce French words when asked but does not tend to use them spontaneously. These results emphasize the discrepancy between learning and performance and show that we must be careful when judging to what degree a second language has been acquired based on oral production alone.

Perfectionism

Kyle is the most perfectionistic of all six subjects. He does not seem willing to risk making mistakes in any type of activity. This is particularly evident where French language development is concerned. Kyle's use of French is slightly delayed compared to the others, but once he begins to use the second language, it comes out in more correct and complete responses. This may be because of his desire to be certain he does not make a mistake before attempting to say a word or sentence in French. Krashen's (1981) monitor hypothesis states that while conscious learning is not responsible for fluency, it can be used as an editor or monitor. Kyle uses the monitor effectively as he consciously attempts to learn French. Krashen cautions that in normal conversation, there is rarely enough time to consult conscious rules. In the classroom situation as well, there is so much new vocabulary being used all the time that it is difficult for students to monitor all new input. This may account for Kyle's correct but limited utterances as he does not have enough time to monitor and speak French.

FAMILY EXPERIENCES

The attitudes and background experiences of the children's parents will now be discussed in an attempt to examine whether some of the similarities and differences among the parents might have affected their children's second language development. All six of the subjects come from two-parent families and all have at least one sibling. Some of the home activities described in the parent journals will also be presented, again in terms of their effect on French language development.

French Language Background

Only Amanda's parents have extensive experience with the French language. Although they are Anglophone, they come from Quebec and continue to have contact with native French speakers when they go back to visit relatives. Amanda's parents occasionally speak French at home with her and she, in turn, uses some French with them as well. At the beginning of the year she was more reluctant to use the language of the school at home but she became more tolerant of her parents speaking French to her as the year progressed. Mr. and Mrs. C. also spoke French, although not exclusively, in the classroom when they participated as parent helpers.

None of the other subjects' parents come from a French background. Despite this, both Joel's parents and Katie's parents do attempt to use what little French they know when they interact with children both at home and in the classroom. They also try to learn more French whenever they can.

Katie's father is the only one of the twelve parents who expresses a certain amount of frustration over his inability to speak French.

The extra exposure Amanda has to French in the home might have contributed to her above-average oral production in French. However, the lack of a similar exposure does not seem to have acted as a detriment to the other children. Katie, for example, speaks even more French than Amanda, despite the fact that her parents speak very little French.

Learning Goals For Their Children and Attitudes Toward French

Only two sets of parents--Amanda's and Kyle's--expressed "instrumental" motives for placing their children in the French immersion program. "Instrumental" motivation can be defined as wanting to acquire another language for some practical purpose such as for a profession, as opposed to "integrative" motivation when the language is acquired in order to feel a closer sense of identity with another group (Krashen, 1981, p. 61). Amanda's parents feel that they might return to the province of Quebec someday and want to prepare their children for that possibility. Kyle's parents feel that a knowledge of French will open up their son's career and travel opportunities.

Linda's parents are most interested in encouraging learning of all kinds by exposing their children to new things, among which French is only one. Both Angela's parents and Katie's parents seem primarily concerned with their children's enjoyment of learning French as well as their enjoyment of other activities. The parents in this study seem to be judging the success of the immersion experience by how much their

children like it. During the interviews, the parents gave the impression that if their children ceased to enjoy learning French, they would not hesitate to withdraw them from the program.

View of Their Children

The parents of Amanda and Katie expressed their subjective opinion that they feel their daughters are above average in academic ability, that is, that the girls are "quite bright". This opinion does not necessarily correspond with performance on readiness tasks, although both girls can be considered above average in verbal ability and demonstrate the greatest oral use of French. Amanda, in particular, experiences a fair amount of difficulty in doing more abstract language and math activities. Joel's mother also continually expresses her amazement at his use of French, but without making any judgements about his intelligence.

It is possible that the self-fulfilling prophecy has come into play in these parent/child relationships. Children may be more successful second language learners if the significant adults in their lives tell them that they are.

Knowledge and Interest in Education

Only one of the twelve parents--Amanda's mother--has any formal training in an education-related field. Mrs. C. is currently enrolled in a teacher aide program at a college. She has also worked as a teacher aide in a French immersion E.C.S. classroom. Amanda has been used as a subject in a number of her mother's assignments and home

activities are often chosen specifically for their educational value. Although Mrs. C. may make more conscious choices of activities based on their educational value, the other parents also provide "educational" opportunities for their children at home. Parenting skills and awareness of stimulating and appropriate activities for young children are not necessarily learned through formal education.

Amanda's mother and Linda's mother are members of the early childhood program Local Advisory Committee. Linda's mother is also on the executive committee of the local Canadian Parents For French chapter. Membership in these organizations may give these parents a certain amount of knowledge about specific aspects of their children's educational programs.

Occupation

A number of parents have come into direct contact with foreign languages through their jobs. This has contributed to their choice of French immersion for their children as they have experienced a direct need for knowledge of languages other than English. Although his experiences were with languages other than French or English, Kyle's father has encountered a number of foreign languages in his work overseas. Kyle's parents express a direct relationship between this exposure and their decision to place their son in the French immersion program. Three additional fathers--Joel's father, Amanda's father and Katie's father--work for Air Canada, a national, bilingual company. These three men are exposed to written and oral French in the workplace daily, even if they are not bilingual themselves. Joel's father, in

particular, mentioned that he had been overlooked for a particular position because of his inability to speak French. This gave him an even stronger desire for his children to become bilingual.

Parental exposure to foreign languages in the workplace may have less to say about their children's progress in the immersion program than it does about their placement in the program. This reinforces the notion that pre-selection procedures are in effect and that the children in French immersion programs are not representative of the general population. Parents who place their children in immersion programs may be predisposed to having certain characteristics such as direct experiences with foreign languages.

Follow-Up of School Experiences

Five of the six sets of parents (all but Linda's parents) reported extensive discussions at home about what went on at school. This also includes a sharing of French words and songs the children had learned. However Kyle's parents and Joel's parents qualified this extension of French into the home by saying that if their children are pushed too hard, they become unwilling to produce any French.

Joel, Katie and Amanda are all exposed to French in the home through a conscious effort by their parents. The parents buy them French records and tapes and expose them to native French speakers. This type of experience is certainly not detrimental to these children's second language acquisition and is likely a great benefit. All three of them, Katie and Amanda especially, are consistent users of the French language, possibly owing partly to the extra time it was heard.

Self-Concept

Joel, Katie and Angela all help their parents with a variety of chores around the house which may include cooking or cleaning. Perhaps this contributes to the development of a positive self-concept and to their view of themselves as capable learners. However, even the children who are not described as being responsible for certain household chores seemed to have relatively high levels of self-esteem. A positive self-concept may be necessary for school and second language success but is likely acquired in a variety of ways.

First Language Experiences

All six sets of parents reported that they read frequently to their children at home. The children are thus all exposed to rich language experiences in their first language and possess positive attitudes toward books and reading. None of the subjects can be described as having come from a deprived first language environment. This may contribute to the overall success of all of the subjects in terms of their French language development.

This finding supports the work of James Cummins (1981) who devised the Common Underlying Proficiency Model (CUP) of bilingual proficiency. This model was designed to show how experience with either language can promote development of the proficiency underlying both languages, given adequate motivation and exposure to both either in school or in the wider environment. In other words, communicative proficiency already developed in L_1 can readily be transferred to L_2, given motivation to

learn L_2 and exposure to L_2. Thus, which language is used in the home is, in itself, relatively unimportant for students' academic development. What is important for academic success is the quality of interaction children experience with adults (Wells, 1979). The fact that subjects in this study all are adequately prepared in terms of their first language, enables them to transfer what they know about learning a language to the acquisition of a second.

Relationship With Siblings

All of the subjects have at least one younger sibling and all use this younger brother or sister as a student to whom they teach French or other things they learn in school. If one assumes that those children with older siblings were at the receiving end of this teacher modelling by the older brothers or sisters in the past, one might expect these subjects to be more advanced in their level of French oral production.

There are two subjects in this situation--Katie and Linda. None of the other subjects have older siblings also in the French immersion program. Katie has definitely been affected by the fact that her brother is also learning French, although she is motivated to compete with him, not necessarily to learn from him. She does not take into account the two year difference in age and experience with the French language, rather she seems to compare herself directly to him.

Linda does not appear to be nearly as affected by her older sister as does Katie. She does not compete with her, nor does she imitate her. This may be because of the fact that Linda's sister is experiencing some difficulty in school. Linda does, however, play the role of teacher

with her younger sister and speaks French when she does so. It is possible that playing the teacher in a teacher/student dramatic role play situation has a greater positive effect on French language production than playing the student. Although student participation is valued and encouraged, the teacher is still viewed as the more active producer and the student is viewed as the more passive receiver.

Preferred Activities

All of the children engage in a wide variety of activities including: physical play, crafts, reading, writing, constructing, playing games and watching television. All but one of the children are involved in at least one extracurricular activity. Although each of the children has favorite activities, it does not prevent them from developing a broad range of interests and abilities. Those children who possess more advanced oral production skills in French do not seem to have achieved this by consistently engaging in a certain activity or type of activity. As the E.C.E. official philosophy suggests, if not pressured, children will naturally choose activities which develop all aspects of their being.

Relationship With Parents

All parents in the study are highly involved in their children's lives. They spend time reading to their children, talking to them, playing with them and taking them places. All families have a more or less traditional child care arrangement with the mothers spending more

time at home with the children than the fathers; however all six fathers are involved in the upbringing of their children.

The enriched home environments from which the children came, as well as the quality time spent with parents has likely contributed to the children's relative success in school, perhaps even more so than the success they have experienced in terms of second language acquisition. These particular children might have been successful in any school program. As mentioned earlier, this lends support to other research findings (Genesee, 1987) which suggest that children enrolled in French immersion programs tend to come from homogeneous backgrounds.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Although each of the six children attend the same class, with the same teacher and the same classmates, each has a unique school experience. As the classroom teacher, I allow children to take responsibility for their own choices of activities and peer groupings. Thus, the individual preferences of the children become evident when one examines their experiences in the classroom.

Teacher Modelling

Amanda and Katie display "teacher" behaviours most frequently. It is during these dramatic play times that the greatest amount of French is spoken. Dramatic play occurs when children engage in non-directed role play in a centre of their choice, such as the playhouse, the story corner or the block centre. These two girls identify closely with me

and as they model by behaviour, they model my speech and language as well. Katie, the most predominant "teacher", seems to place herself in a role equal to mine rather than seeing herself as one of the other children. She takes it upon herself to explain things to the others and even to discipline them.

It is interesting to note that all six of the children use French outside the classroom in a teacher/student situation in which they act the role of the teacher. This is likely because their concept of a teacher is someone who speaks French, so when they take on the role of the teacher, they also speak French. The student is most often a younger sibling, but can also be a neighborhood friend or a parent. Students are almost always someone with less knowledge of or experience with the French language than the kindergarten children.

Literacy Development

Katie and Linda tend to be the most advanced of the subjects in terms of literacy development. They both seem to have a good concept of the meaning of print and enjoy making stories in their individual writing scribblers. These consist mainly of pictures with some teacher-printed labels. Katie wrote some of her own words during the latter part of the year, usually in English. She also engages in frequent oral "reading". As she is one of the more verbal children, this is not surprising. Katie tells stories while turning the pages of the book. The book is generally turned away from her toward imaginary or real listeners as I do when reading a story to the class. In contrast to her writing, Katie's "reading" is generally a mixture of

English and French. This may be because the French immersion E.C.S. program places more emphasis on oral French than on written French, thus making it more natural for her to read than to write in French.

Both Joel's parents and Kyle's parents reported that the boys engage in reading and writing at home. Unlike the two girls, however, this does not continue in a classroom environment. Because these activities are done in the home, they are performed exclusively in English. It is possible that the children feel more confident and competent in their first language and so will be drawn to read and write in English before French. As the French immersion kindergarten setting does not directly stimulate literacy, the children may associate reading and writing solely with English. Also, their audience is likely an English-speaking parent, so it is more appropriate for them to write in the language they know their parents understand.

Attitude Toward School

All of the subjects demonstrated a positive attitude toward school as well as toward French immersion. This positive attitude is a characteristic often used to describe good language learners (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The children's parents reported isolated instances of the children not wanting to come to school but these were rare and no more frequent than in English programs. The children were generally enthusiastic about the French immersion kindergarten program. In fact, both Joel's parents and Katie's parents noted that their children brag to their neighborhood friends about learning French and indicate that their school is better because of the second language. This may explain

why none of the subjects experienced a major block or negative attitude toward learning French. If the total school experience is positive for them, the introduction to the second language has a better chance of being positive as well.

FRENCH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Although all of the above categories were discussed in terms of their relationship to French language development, there are some specific aspects of second language acquisition which remain to be examined.

Singing

Singing French songs previously learned in school is one of the most common forms of oral production for the six children. They all sing in French in the classroom but, even more importantly, they all sing French songs at home. Songs seem to be an effective teaching tool, giving the children a relatively lengthy French utterance which they can take with them into the world beyond the classroom.

Weber and Tardif (in press) propose that songs become part of the culture specific to teaching French immersion kindergarten.

> "Most of the songs are accompanied by meaningful body movements and provide outlets for emotional expression. Singing might also serve to cement the child's sense of belonging to a group through collective participation in a shared event, cultivating a sense of 'we-ness' and a commonly shared base of classroom culture. The songs serve as important vehicles of communication concerning classroom activity long before the literal meaning of their words is clearly understood."

Use of French and English

Four of the subjects--Katie, Amanda, Angela and Joel--produced sentences which are a mixture of French and English, a kind of interlanguage. This does not seem to be developmental as the other two children--Kyle and Linda--tended to produce unilingual sentences only. The children who demonstrate the use of interlanguage produce the greatest frequency of French utterances and are the most verbal in both languages. On the other hand, Kyle and Linda produce relatively few French utterances and are not overly verbal in either language.

Wong Fillmore (1985, 1989) proposes that learners who have difficulty taking risks by acting upon the things they have learned through guessing or who are unwilling to risk much guessing at all will learn new languages slowly, painfully, or not at all. They may be afraid of being wrong, or of appearing foolish. This personality characteristic has not appeared to act as a detriment to second language learning in this study. Even children such as Kyle and Linda, who are more hesitant to speak French, do so once they feel confident. At this stage in the program, they are allowed the time to feel comfortable speaking French and are not pressured to produce before they feel ready. This unwillingness to take risks may or may not cause a problem for these children later on in the immersion program.

It is possible that the group of four children who mix the two languages has a greater need to communicate orally than the other two. This stimulates them to use French, the language of the classroom, in any way they possibly can, even if it means mixing the two languages.

They realize the expectation of the teacher is that they speak French and will do so to whatever capacity they are able.

Kyle and Linda, however, may not feel as great a need to communicate orally in order to function comfortably in the classroom. They are not highly verbal in English, and yet are able to function quite comfortably in an English family, peer group, etc. As with their English, they will use French when they can, but they are not likely to use individual French words within an English sentence. Another explanation is that this difference is the result of a different learning style--that is, being more of a perfectionist and a more conscious language monitor. They may be unwilling to mix languages because they know that is not perfect. When they finally do speak in French it is in complete utterances, even if these utterances consist of a single word such as "Merci".

Kyle is the only subject who consistently translates teacher utterances into English. He acts as a "mediator of meaning", suggesting interpretations or clues to others (Weber & Tardif, 1988). This seems to be for the benefit of other children in the class who may not have understood. In a sense he is taking risks in "guessing" the meaning of my French utterances. He appears to have the type of cognitive style which allows for the development of a strong and direct link between French and English. This is also evidence that Kyle's comprehension of French is higher than his production of French, lending support to Krashen's view that comprehension preceeds production.

Creative French

Katie and Amanda both use "creative" French, that is, they use nonsense words spoken with a French accent and intonation or they use French vocabulary out of context. This is likely to extend their French utterances and to give others the illusion that they are more proficient French speakers than they actually are. They realize that they are not truly speaking French; it is a type of dramatic play. This characteristic may be indicative of more advanced second language producers, as Katie and Amanda are two of the most frequent French users in the class.

Rehearsal

One hypothesis in second language acquisition theory is that it may not be the L_2 input the learners receive which will distinguish between more and less successful second language users but rather what the learners do with that L_2 input once it is received. The children who rehearse and repeat teacher utterances may be able to produce French more frequently. Katie, Amanda and Joel are most likely to rehearse teacher utterances overtly and are also among those most likely subsequently to use those utterances. Attention must be drawn, however, to the word overtly. These were the most verbal children, so it stands to reason that their rehearsal and their second language production would be overt. This is something which can be observed and measured, however, it does not mean that the other children are not covertly rehearsing and producing the second language. In fact, it is highly

likely that an intense listener like Kyle is silently going over and over the French he hears in his mind in order to store it in memory for future use.

Metalanguage

Angela is the only subject who demonstrated advanced metalinguistic awareness. She used language to talk about language. She is able to verbalize her reflections on the similarities and differences between English and French and demonstrates a growing awareness of what it means to be in a French immersion program and to learn a second language by talking about it with others. Here is a conversation I had with Angela at the skating rink while doing up her skates. A parent had just come up and spoken to me in English. I also responded in English.

Angela:

How come you talk English with her?

Teacher:

Elle ne parle pas français.

Angela:

She doesn't know French?

Teacher:

Non.

Angela:

Why not?

Teacher:

Parce qu'elle n'a pas appris le français comme toi.

Angela:

So you talk French to kids and English to adults.

This characteristic does not necessarily ensure successful second language acquisition; it may be more indicative of a personal cognitive style and stage of development.

Learning Rhythm

Each subject demonstrated a number of increases and decreases in terms of frequency of oral French production throughout the year. Each spoke more French at times during the year and less at other times, but there did not appear to be a definite pattern to this fluctuation. Perhaps these fluctuations are indicative of each individual's distinct learning rhythm.

Krashen's (1981) input hypothesis claims that speaking in a second language is not taught directly, rather, speaking fluency emerges over time. He suggests that the best way to "teach" speaking is simply to provide "comprehensible input". This is the methodology which has been adhered to in my own French immersion early childhood classroom. Krashen believes that speech will come when the learner feels ready, and that this readiness state arrives at different times for different people. This hypothesis supports the findings of the present study where subjects' speech followed their own individual learning rhythms.

One general pattern which did emerge is that all children exhibited an initial use of French which was relatively high. This was followed by various fluctuations and at least one characteristically low point somewhere in the middle of the school year. A possible explanation for this general pattern may be that at the beginning of the year, the novelty of the French language situation makes a great impact on the students and causes them to use it more often in their speech. Then, as the year progresses, they become more habituated to hearing French and it ceases to impress upon them as much as in the early stages of the year. They accept it as part of the normal classroom environment. Thus, they may go through a period where they refrain from playing with the sounds and words of the French language. Then, toward the end of the school year, after a considerable amount of L_2 input, the French language may return to a more conscious level of the students' thought and they start to use it more frequently. Another explanation is that early use of French is primarily formulaic speech, as children produce routine expressions they hear daily. Production toward the end of the year is more creative and is the direct result of a need to communicate. During the low point of French production around mid-year, a cognitive re-structuring may be taking place in order to allow children to produce second language utterances at a more demanding and higher level of thinking. Although no attempt to quantify the data was made, analysis of my classroom observation of the subjects' production revealed this general trend.

CHAPTER 5--DISCUSSION OF IMPLICATIONS

Before presenting the implications of the study, the findings will be summarized.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

At the beginning of this study four research questions were presented. The findings will be summarized along with a review of the four questions.

1) What factors affect children as they begin to experience learning a second language in the social context of an early childhood classroom?

-The individual nature of the children's personalities led to individual patterns of French language development. Differences may be linked more to individual learning style or the way in which children learn rather than the result or what they learn.

-The learners who were more likely to play with the sounds and words of the second language, using what little L_2 they had, had higher levels of oral production than the learners who waited for whole sentence production. However, even children who were at first more hesitant to speak French, did so once they felt confident.

-All subjects engaged in a wide variety of activities at home and at school. The subjects who possessed more advanced oral

production skills in French did not seem to have achieved them by consistently engaging in a certain activity or type of activity.

-The subjects who identified closest with the teacher, and modelled teacher behaviour, including speech and language (French), produced the greatest amount of spoken French. All six subjects were found to use French outside the classroom in a teacher/student situation in which they acted the role of the teacher.

-All subjects demonstrated a positive attitude toward school as well as toward French immersion which may explain why none of the subjects experienced a major block in learning French.

-Singing French songs previously learned in school was one of the most common forms of oral production for all six subjects. They all sang French songs both in the classroom and at home.

-Each subject demonstrated a number of increases and decreases in terms of frequency of oral French production throughout the year. These fluctuations were indicative of each subject's distinct learning rhythm.

2) Is success in an immersion program dependent solely on what goes on in the classroom or do children's home environments play a role in their second language acquisition?

-The enriched home environments from which all subjects came, as well as the quality time spent with their parents, likely

contributed to the children's relative success in school, perhaps even more so than the success they have experienced in terms of second language acquisition. These particular subjects might have been successful in any school program.

3) How do children use their first language experiences when learning a second?

-Verbal ability in French parallelled verbal ability in English. The most verbal of the six children in their first language were also the most verbal in their second. In contrast, the less verbal children carried this trait over into their second language as well.

-All subjects were exposed to rich first language experiences in the home. This may have contributed to the overall success of all of the subjects in terms of their French language development as they transferred what they knew about learning their first language to the acquisition of a second.

4) How can educators use the answers to the above questions to design immersion programs which will provide positive second language experiences for the greatest number of students?

This question will be answered in the following section.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

The findings presented in the previous chapters have numerous implications for both teachers and researchers. First, the effects the findings could have on classroom teachers and immersion students will be discussed, followed by suggestions for possible future directions for immersion research.

Individual Learning Styles

None of the six subjects approaches the task of learning a second language in exactly the same way. Each demonstrates a personal learning style, consistent with each child's unique personality, talents and home environment. Each child also demonstrates an individual learning rhythm depending on the amount of second language exposure needed by that child prior to actual oral or written use of the language. None of the six children could be characterized as "unsuccessful second language learners" although they all use French in different ways.

Over the course of the study, I learned much about classroom observation by being a teacher/researcher. I learned that, as teachers, we often miss some of the second language production that goes on because we are so busy "teaching" that we do not take the time to sit back and observe the ways in which our students are exploring the French language in their play. There is likely much more use of French occurring in immersion kindergarten classrooms than many teachers realize.

The more verbal children in immersion classrooms are more obvious producers of French. The danger of this for teachers is that these children may receive more of our attention and French input, enabling them to be that much more successful. We must be careful to attend as much (or perhaps more) to the quieter children such as Kyle, children who do not naturally demand as much of our attention as their classmates who are more verbal and extraverted. We must also be careful not to overemphasize oral French at the expense of listening comprehension. It is important that we value self-expression through media other than speech. Many of the children in our classrooms express themselves more easily through the written word, through movement, or through art. These forms of communication must be valued so that children may develop self-esteem and comfort in the knowledge that they are accepted at school for who they are. Perhaps once the threat of rejection is removed they will feel freer to converse in French, which is still one of our ultimate, primary goals.

Early Childhood Teaching Models and Philosophy

There could be a number of reasons why none of the subjects demonstrates extreme difficulty coping in a French immersion classroom. It is possible that since only six out of a class of twenty-nine were selected, the children experiencing the most difficulty were missed. Given the subject selection method, this is a possibility. Because of my knowledge of all the children in my class, however, my personal belief is that the subjects were fairly representative of their classmates. I believe that the classroom environment was one where all

children could experience success with the French language as well as with many other things. The early childhood program, as well as my own personal philosophy of teaching young children, endorses a learning environment which allows for children to meet their individual needs at all developmental levels. The children studied, along with their classmates, are active decision-makers, who take responsibility for meeting their own needs and for their own learning. I believe that young children naturally want to learn. As this study demonstrates, when given the opportunity to acquire a second language according to their individual preferences, learning styles and learning rhythms, they will do so.

The progress of these same six children might have been completely different had they been in a more structured learning environment where individual needs were not considered. Extending the early childhood philosophy into the primary and subsequent grades might help to perpetuate the success these children are experiencing in their initial year of the French immersion program.

Activity-Centered Immersion

The innovative activity-centered late immersion programs in the Montreal area, although they begin at the grade seven level, resemble significantly the early childhood classroom used in the present study. In the activity-centered program, students work individually or in small groups on projects of their own choice, with general themes and guidelines prescribed by the teacher (Stevens, 1983). Students choose the specific nature of the activities to be undertaken and are able to

work at their own pace and according to their own personal learning styles in the achievement of their projects. The activity-based program also encourages much student-to-student interaction in addition to teacher-to-student interaction. At the end of grade seven, Stevens (1983) found that the students in the activity-centered immersion program had achieved the same level of proficiency as the regular immersion students in the interpersonal communication skills of speaking and listening comprehension, and almost the same levels of proficiency in reading and writing and in half the amount of time spent in the regular immersion classroom. An activity-centered program from kindergarten through high school might produce even more impressive results.

Both activity-centered immersion classrooms and early childhood immersion classrooms motivate students by encouraging the use of language in situations of personal choice and by providing opportunities for extended discourse among peers. Perhaps French immersion teachers need to examine and adapt their teaching practices and philosophies in order for more children to succeed in the program. Far too often we, as educators, try to make the child fit the program rather than making the program fit the child.

Teacher/Student Relationship

Two of the subjects--Amanda and Katie--speak French frequently when imitating me. They identify closely with me and as they model my behaviour, they model my speech and language as well. This may be an example of the importance of a positive relationship between a teacher

and her students. The closer the students feel to their teacher, the more they will want to emulate her behavior, including her use of French. Affective variables in second language acquisition are indeed important.

Teacher modelling may also shed new light on the effect of integrative orientation on the second language acquisition of young children. This learner factor has been found in Canada to affect second language acquisition positively, but in older learners only. Learners of kindergarten age have not been found to be motivated to become part of the world of the target language group (Strong, 1983; Swain & Burnaby, 1976). However, researchers may have been using too broad a definition of "target language group". If we narrow the definition of target language community to the classroom teacher, the only French-speaking person the immersion student may know, second language acquisition may well be enhanced by a desire to become like the teacher.

Influence of Gender on Second Language Learning

If children who wish to be more like their teacher have an advantage in learning a second language, one might question the role of gender of both the teacher and the students. The vast majority of French immersion teachers at the primary level are female. Are boys as likely as girls to model a female teacher? It may have been a coincidence but the children who exhibit the most teacher-like behaviours in the classroom in this study are both girls.

However, it may not be the gender of the teacher which is the independent variable; it may be the gender of the students. Girls may

be more likely to model either a female or male teacher and boys less likely to model a teacher of either gender. These are only hypotheses and much more research is needed on the influence of gender differences on second language learning in order to find more definite answers to these questions.

Peer Teaching

Although not all six of the subjects display "teacher" behaviours in the classroom, all of them play "teacher" outside of the classroom. The students are either a younger sibling, a neighborhood friend, a parent, or someone else with very little knowledge of French. It is when the kindergarten children are "teaching" that they are highly likely to express themselves in French. Immersion teachers can take advantage of this desire to speak French while playing teacher by actually planning for it to take place in a more structured setting. Peer teaching could be encouraged in and among French immersion classes. If children are invited to share special skills with others who are less experienced they may be more inclined to model the French language production of their teacher. Both in-class peer teaching as well as exchanges between older and younger immersion students are possibilities which need to be explored.

Literacy Development

While two sets of parents reported that their sons engage in reading and writing at home, this does not seem to occur in the classroom. The boys' interest in exploring print in their native language does not

extend into their second language. I have always assumed that this exploration is delayed in the second language because the children have not been exposed to a sufficient amount oral language and that a richness in oral language precedes written production. Therefore, I have not provided nearly as much written French as oral French in my classroom. While this personal philosophy contains a certain amount of logic, it also contradicts what I have discovered about individual learning styles and rhythms. If one follows the "oral precedes written" philosophy, what happens to the children who are less verbal? They may be much more stimulated by the written word than the spoken word.

True, children learn to understand and speak their first language before they learn to read and write it, but this may not necessarily apply as strictly to learning in a second language. Perhaps a better balance between oral and written input is needed in order to meet the individual needs of a greater percentage of young immersion students.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Replicating This Study

In replicating this study, I would include children from more heterogeneous home backgrounds. In this study, all subjects came from two-parent families where one parent was at home for the major part of the day. The study could be expanded to include: children from single parent families, children whose parents are both working outside the home and who spend a large part of the day in a daycare or other type of

child-care arrangement, or children whose first language is one other than English.

Another aspect I would modify is the parent journals. I would provide more direction regarding aspects of family life which they are to observe. I would give them specific categories of activities which they are to observe or questions which they are to answer based on their observations of their child's behaviour. This way there would be less variation among journals and the type of data provided by each journal would be more consistent and more easily compared.

It would also be valuable to have more detailed documentation of the subjects' second language development. French language production and comprehension could be examined more carefully and systematically, perhaps through interviews with the subjects themselves.

Immersion Research

One possible direction for future immersion research is in the domain of teacher/student relationships. The teacher is an important person in the young child's life, especially in the initial stages of immersion programs. The type of relationship the children have with their teacher may greatly affect the children's success in learning French. Specific areas which might be studied are teacher modelling and gender differences.

The results of immersion programs have been widely studied. Perhaps what is lacking is greater insight into those pedagogical practices which are most appropriate for French immersion programs. What goes on in individual classrooms may make a great difference as to

how successful children are in learning a second language. Some of the topics which have been briefly introduced in this study are: attention to individual lerning styles and learning rhythms of children, activity-centered classroms, peer teaching and literacy development. If children are not successful in immersion programs as they currently exist, it is the programs which we must change, not the children.

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CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CODING SHEET

DATE _____

SETTING	CONTEXT	OBSERVATIONS OF CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR/SPEECH	REMARKS/INTERPRETATIONS

APPENDIX B

October Interview Questions

1) What is your experience with the French language?

2) Which one of you encourages your child to learn French most?

3) How do you show your support and encouragement?

4) Do you have any other children at home? in immersion?

5) Does your child share school experiences with you?

6) In what situations does your child try to use French vocabulary, songs, numbers, etc. at home?

7) Describe your child's attitude toward learning French.

8) In September, how did your child feel about the prospect of being taught in a completely different language?

9) Has his/her attitude changed after a month of exposure? If so, in what ways?

10) How do you as parents feel about your child's participation in the immersion program?

11) What influenced you to enroll your child in the immersion program in the first place?

12) How do you feel about the amount of time you have to spend with your child at home?

13) When you spend time together with your family, or individually with (Name), what kinds of things do you do?

14) How would you describe your child's personality?

15) Does your child play a lot with other children or does he/she prefer to spend time alone?

16) Do you find your child to be quite talkative?

17) Do either of you have any background in education or child development?

Sample Interview

Interview with Amanda's parents--October 13, 1988

I;
These questions are all for either one of you so just jump in whenever. What is your experience with the French language yourselves?

Mrs. C.;
Well, my father is French and my mother is English but a lot of my father's relatives speak very little English so when we visited them we had to either pick it up or be excluded and...we lived in Quebec so it was there. It is there, so that's about it. What about you?

Mr. C.;
Me, well, I'm of European descent, Polish basically and we lived in ---- which is half French half English and we had to learn French in order to...get our senior matric. so French was a compulsory language in Quebec for the English.

I;
And did you speak it at home as well with your parents?

Mr. C.;
No, not...because my parents are both, well my mom speaks a little bit of French, not that much. My dad a little bit too but...he's more...English at home or Polish. One of the two. But we basically...most of my friends when I was growing up were either English or French so we had to talk in either language.

I;
Do either one of you speak French with Amanda at home at all?

Mr. C.;
Basically we both do.

Mrs. C.;
Yes.

Mr. C.;
Until she finds difficulty and then we start explaining it to her.

Mrs. C.;
We used to use French...before...Amanda...well actually a few years ago we used to use French to keep secrets or whatever you will from the kids like if we were going out for dinner he and I would just...and they really started clueing in and they caught key words. In fact, we used to say Amanda was "tres fatiguée" and she'd go "I am not fatiguée" and I don't know whether or not she knew what "fatiguée" meant but she certainly, you know, picked it up that it was not a nice time for her,

like, with being tired and it isn't whether it's English or French, when she's tired but...now like he says we usually just...if she says something like a colour or...whatever we do, we just carry it on until she walks away or changes the subject.

I;
How does she react to your speaking French?

Mrs. C.;
Actually, when I first started working in the kindergarten as the aide and I would come home in the French mode, if you will, and she would look at me and "Don't you talk to me like that!" like it just sort of grated on her and she didn't like it and then slowly as that year progressed and she was at home. She wasn't in any kind of a school system or anything, not even Tiny Tots. As the year went on, by the end of that June she was getting quite used to and had picked up a few of the words then and could count to 10 by her other brother and sister carrying that on counting in English and in French. Like, they seemed to...the older ones they seemed to be...supplying a lot of that as well for her, you know, so it doesn't seem so foreign any more.

I;
Are your other children in any type of French program as well at school?

Mrs. C.;
No. They, Leah was in a French immersion program in Quebec her kindergarten year and then we moved to Alberta and at that time the only program was in (name of town). When we first settled in (name of city) there wasn't a French immersion program. Then we came to (name of town) and to someone in the new locale especially for us. We didn't know anyone in (town) at all and (town) seemed like totally like, wow. You know, now we know it's a 10 minute drive and the bussing system and everything, it's...but that was 9 years ago so it was, you know, different. But we, they both wish and we wish that we had kept them in it, but...

I;
Which one of you do you think encourages Amanda to speak French or continue with the French the most, or is there a difference between you?

Mrs. C.;
I don't know. I think it's equal.

Mr. C.;
I don't know. It's pretty equal, you know, because she has cousins on both sides that are French and speak French, on both sides.

Mrs. C.;
And we spend a lot of time in Quebec and...we're not saying next year or the year after but there will probably become, within 10 years that maybe we will settle back in Quebec, or 10-15 years because of his

family and the majority of my family is there and...but even through the summers, like we say with going back to Quebec we want them to be able to converse. His mom and dad live in (name of town) and it's, I guess more French than the English so we want them to be able to...adapt to both ends of the country. I think it's equal.

I;
How do you feel that you show Amanda your support and encouragement at home? In what ways might she be able to pick that up that you're in favor of the French?

Mrs. C.;
Well just by, number one I guess would be speaking he and I between each of ourselves...She has French books that I've bought in Quebec and her aunt has given her in Quebec and brought home and they're up there and she knows they're in French and French cartoons she watches. She's not into, she doesn't seem to mind the cartoons being in French but the programming as an adult she isn't interested in that. So the French cartoons a couple of times they've been on and she's sat there quite ready to watch them and at least hear the sound of the language.

I;
Does she come home with a lot of her school experiences or does she share much of what happens at school with you here at home?

Mr. C.;
Yes she does and a lot of times she'll play by herself and she'll recite whatever songs or whatever by herself...more or less stop and look and see, you know, look at her and 'Oh, you learned a new song?' 'Yes.'

Mrs. C.;
But the thing of it is how many days has she come home and 'Well, how did it go at school today?' and 'Boring' or 'What did you do at school today?' 'Nothing' and you know darn well that they did something but then get us around the dinner table and the others will be saying 'Oh this happened at school today' and right away she's like 'Well we did this' and you think 'But you said it was boring' so rather than, we don't say 'You said it was boring' we just sort of let her and then it starts to come out, you know. But when she first walks through the door it was just 'Boring' but I don't know if that's because of the other kids, the teenagers coming home and you say 'How was your day?' 'Boring' so we've just kind of sparked it off there that...

I;
Sometimes they get...it seems so complicated to explain everything that it's just easier to get out of it by saying 'Oh nothing'.

Mrs. C.;
This is it and then maybe, yes, maybe you're right and then after she's sort of calmed down or heard the rest of the experiences going on because we do, like at dinner, we talk about the day and stuff like that

and then by maybe that time she's sort of picked out whatever she's chosen to talk about.

I;
In what types of situations does she tend to use the French vocabulary or songs or numbers or things at home? Is there any particular time or place or activity?

Mrs. C.;
Not really, anytime.

Mr. C.;
Not really. You know, we could be driving like we did one time and she came out with all the colours. 'Oh look at the nice pretty colours.' 'Yes they're yellow and red' in French, you know, jaune and rouge. (unintelligible) to keep it going, you know, and so I asked her what other colours there were. But it comes up basically anytime. There's no specific time...or when she's by herself she'll...she plays a lot by herself, then she'll...recite some of the songs that they had at school or whatever or she'll ask us to help her sing the different songs, or along that line. There's no specific time. It's just I guess whatever she sees and flashes...whatever she's thinking flashes in her mind.

I;
Could you describe for me Amanda's attitude toward learning French?

Mrs. C.;
She's keen on it. She comes up and she says...'What does such-and-such in French mean?' and perhaps her pronounciation will be off and you'll say 'Well do you mean this?' and she'll go 'Yes' so you'll tell her, or she'll ask 'How do you say this in French?' and you'll tell her and she'll take it away and go off but she has shown interest in translating it or the new words...stuff like that. What did she want recently? She wanted to know if I knew a song in [illegible]--Tapis, tapis, rouge. And then I sang it how I...and I just picked it up in the kindergarten classroom two years ago. 'No, that's not the way!' and I said 'Well, I'm sorry but that's the way I know it' 'That's not the way' and I said 'Well you go and learn it better and then you come back and teach it to me' 'OK'. So, you know, she's, I don't know...my opinion is she's just keen on LEARNING right now so hopefully it will stay.

I;
In September, how do you feel she felt about coming into French immersion and being taught in another language? How much might you have explained to her before she actually got into the classroom?

Mrs. C.;
We just told her that...she was going to be learning French and that the teacher would speak to her in French. She expressed some concern that, about...would she be able to understand to go to the bathroom and that

seemed to be her key one. Remember when we were into the school that day and she wanted to know if you, the teacher, would be able to understand if she had to go to the bathroom and I said yes that you spoke English and you would understand her. So I think that was her main...one of her fears was that you wouldn't understand her and she wouldn't be able to understand you but I think now that she knows that you can speak English and, you know, she isn't expected to be French right away, that she's just learning, I think that's relieved her a bit. If she had any at all, but I know that one was 'Will she know if I have to go to the bathroom?' and maybe that was me too because I was stressing that I couldn't be doing certain things for her anymore in the bathroom and maybe that went to giving her that concern, I don't know.

I;
How do you as parents feel about her participation in a bilingual program, in choosing immersion? What influenced you to put her into an immersion program in the first place? Was it because of your family background, or because it was an all round good learning experience, or...

Mrs. C.;
Well, I'd have to say it's a lot of reasons. Mainly because we both feel that...the more...the more languages your child has the easier to learn another one in the long run will be. Yes, being from Quebec, we wanted them to be able to converse when we go back to Quebec...our own personal feeling that...it doesn't hurt. I mean, we just feel...we can't...we stress this to our kids all the time, education in any form will not hurt you. I mean it's...just do it...whatever. I guess that's about...I don't know. And then the...careerwise, you know for the older kids and...

Mr. C.;
Once they get out of school they basically can go anywhere and get a job because they can converse in both languages.

Mrs. C.;
And Canada is, since 1969 a bilingual country and the two chosen languages are English and French, French or English, wherever or however you want to say it so...you know, be a good Canadian and at least open up and try. If there's a block, fine there's a block now. But it may be gone in...five months, five years and then you can pick it up again. Like I am angry my father did not speak French to us. The French I learned was on the street and in school, but then my father has a very minimum education. My father worked two jobs so he didn't interact with us, the kids, at home. We were raised by an English mother but we played with French kids on the street. We went to a French/English school that was built together so we...it was there, but I just feel if you have it, use it and, and pass it on to your children. I wish he would speak more Polish to the kids and let them have three languages. He does but he swears at them. Like my dad did with us. That's not the language that they'll use on the street.

Mr. C.;
But then I don't know my own language either, so that's one of the downfalls, but...

Mrs. C.;
But I think when they go back to Grandma's and they hear Grandma and Grandpa speaking Polish, already Amanda knows the difference. Grandma's not speaking French to Grandpa. That Grandpa. She has a French Grandpa and a Polish Grandpa and she knows the difference. So I just think it's what they're exposed to myself...the more the merrier.

I;
How do you feel about the amount of time that you have to spend with Amanda at home? Are you happy with it?

Mr. C.;
Too much.

Mrs. C.;
Yes, you've got too much and I don't have enough.

Mr. C.;
No, well, it's hard to say because, you know, each day is different and some days she'll come home and she'll want to go and play with her friends and, or her friend will call and come over and play with her, so we don't...you know, each day varies with the amount of time that she's at home.

Mrs. C.;
And there are some days when they're, she's, not specifically Amanda, but they're under our feet all the time and you kind of think, 'Well, I can't wait to get them to bed.' At least that's my feeling. A quick bath, a quick story and off to bed. I don't know, like he says, some days she's content to come home like this afternoon she came home, said 'Hi Dad', and went upstairs to play with her Barbies and now downstairs, then it's been an hour with the Barbies and now she'll be downstairs till her friend comes home and even as we were driving up she wanted to know if her friend Cheryl was home and we said 'No she has school till later.' So she kind of sets her own pattern as to what...and then of course if we say that we're doing something, she has the choice of either, or not really a choice if the others are at home, she can stay, if that's OK with them and if not then she can come with us or, whatever...stay with them and...So, like it depends. It's really flexible. I'm not a very good stay at home person. I just, I think there's more to do and see and be than taking care of a kitchen and, you know, make a bed, that's it. You know, that's my philosophy of life anyway. It's true though. If you want to just turn that off, I'll tell you.

I;
When you spend time together with your family or individually with Amanda, what are the kinds of things that you like doing?

Mrs. C.;
Well, I guess dinner time is the most time that we all sit together and we just talk about either something that's been on the news, something that's happened in our day...Since I've been to school...going back to school now, I'll bring home something from there and throw it out to them at the table and we'll talk about that...plans that we're making for the weekend or whatever, who's, what Dad's doing. And then the rest of the time...it's really hard.

Mr. C.;
Playing outside.

Mrs. C.;
Yes, playing outside, doing work outside together, like as a family, and as a split family, well not a split family, but two big kids, two little kids, there's not all that much we do do together. Like, we'll drive to (name of city) together but now the older kids are going more their way, but Bob and I and the two little ones will go for drives and talk or we'll go shopping and visit friends, so we...

Mr. C.;
A lot of times --- wants to play outside, and one's watching.

Mrs. C.;
Sometimes we'll just go and lay on the bed or on the sofa and read them stories, like the four of us. Amanda and Andrew in the middle and Bill and I and just read and talk to them about that or, you know, like he says, outside work. But I guess dinnertime is the one time that we get together all six or eight of us at the table now. We have an extended family now, too.

I;
Does Amanda prefer to be with other people, either friends or with you, or does she spend a lot of time alone?

Mr. C.;
Not really.

Mrs. C.;
Not so much. Really, her, I don't know, she's...surprised us. She's really into Barbies and she will go and play, like, an hour, an hour and a half. One day it was two hours that she played with the Barbies. We couldn't believe it. I don't know, I think she's...she can be sociable. She likes to do things with...us as a group: shopping, going to the park, going for walks, so I think she's really...I don't know, flexible as to that, whatever way she chooses.

Mr. C.;
She enjoys having friends over or going over and playing with her friends.

Mrs. C.;
She likes going to the library. She...I don't know...we try not to, to push them in, in any one direction, like 'Get outside and play', like we were, I was raised, so if she wants to go outside and play it's there and if she wants to go upstairs to her room, that's there and downstairs to the TV, that's there for her, so it's real...I think the choice is there for her and whatever her mood suits her, she can go for it.

I;
How would you sort of describe Amanda's personality, the kind of child she is?

Mr. C.;
For myself I think she's very mature for her age and maybe advanced a lot...compared to Andrew when they were the same age. She learns a lot faster, and that, and then she's more interested in learning...but then that's because of the amount of time that we've spent with her compared to teaching her more or less to...

Mrs. C.;
Not only, yes, but you see there was four of us trying to feed Amanda. Amanda came into a situation where there was almost two moms and two dads being Grant and Bill. Grant was what, 10? Yes, and Leah was 12 and I can remember they would come home from school and she'd be just waking up and they'd sit and read her a story. They would take her out, dress her up, and a lot of interaction. She was 8 1/2 months when she said 'Hi', then the kids just said 'Say hi' and she said 'Hi'. I thought 'Wow'. I just about dropped her. 10 1/2 months when she started walking and she hasn't stopped since and they always seemed to...I kind of think of kids as a sponge and we've always been just feeding this into her whereas now Andrew...we know what we've done with Amanda so we're sort of backing off on Andrew, and...he's going aroung like, quite like, lost for a bit there, but...I think she is, like he says, she is mature. She has...she's outgoing...like I had her up to the college today and, um, at her, she wanted to come, and...I left her with...in my lab while I went and did my class in the computer room and at first she was going to sit very quietly in the computer room and then this woman, a friend of mine in the class, Susan came along and said 'Well, if she'd like to come with me' and 'OK', and...you know, before I could --- she chooses and I said 'I'm right here and there's the lab' you know and Susan said 'Fine' you know. 'Go' and when I went back...after about 10 minutes and just sort of poked my nose in the door she was sitting there chatting away to Susan as if she'd known her for years and...she has no...well I shouldn't say no concept of fear. She's been exposed to a lot more than I think a child her age of four, almost five, and I think that's helped her to become what she is or...I think it would help any kid if they were exposed to it, myself, so...she's

very friendly. She's very outgoing. She's very...bright, curious, and I'm trying to be as objective as possible here.

I;
Do you find her to be quite talkative?

Mrs. C.;
Oh, sometimes she does get rambling and then sometimes she makes a lot of sense in her rambling and...yes, I guess she is talkative but then that could be hereditary. Her father's side.

I;
Do either of you have any background in education or child development, course work, or any job related...

Mrs. C.;
Well I do and I think that...well, I'd started taking the course, the teacher aide course in 1985 which would put Amanda what, 2 years and...that, at that time I was...well, prior to that in 1979 I started working as a teacher aide in the special needs classroom, and I kind of did it as a trial and error but I had no concept of...how a kid learns or when a kid learns different things so then by having this background of a course The...Developing Child, I kind of had something to, to work at...when Amanda and Andrew came along and knowing what certain stages Eriksen or Piaget would say that the kids were at. So that's given me a bit of an understanding...and then I guess just the experience of having two big kids and two little kids and knowing that the big kids aren't all that bad so I must have done something right and then you can sort of think, you know, go around it, but other than that...and then being back in the course again this year and watching...or having the difference again...with the kids and their different levels and understanding a bit more, a bit better, what they're trying to teach me.

I;
What course is it that you're taking this year?

Mrs. C.;
I'm taking actually, well, I...am taking the same course over again. It's a year long program at (name of college) and I'm taking The Developing Child which is the study, which is almost...It's a different textbook but it's basically the same. We take Freud, Skinner, Bandura, Piaget, Eriksen and now we're into the pre-natal development. And I'm taking...the computers and I'm taking, uh, what else Bill? Understanding Self and Others, Typing. So I dropped some of the courses because I had passed them and I wanted to be a full-time student but not as quite as full as the other classmates because of having the family and that's about...that's it. That's what I'm taking, and then next term we take Exceptional Children and Learning Disabilities, Exceptional Children, Music With Children and I can't quite remember. I'd have to look in my course outline, but it's...quite extensive. It's quite heavy.

May Interview Questions

1) Do you feel your child has benefited from the French immersion program?

2) Does your child share his/her school experiences with you at home?

3) In what situations does your child try to use French vocabulary, songs, numbers, etc. at home?

4) On the whole, what is your child's attitude toward learning French? Has his/her attitude changed after nine months of exposure? In what ways?

5) Has your child experienced frustrations in learning the language?

6) Can you think of anything you have done at home this year which may have helped your child in school? in French specifically?

7) Have you spoken French with your child at home?

8) How do you as parents feel about your child's participation in the immersion program?

9) Do you plan to continue your child in the immersion program?

10) What extracurricular activities has your child been involved in this year?

Sample Interview

Interview with Katie's parents--May 15, 1989

I:
Do you feel that Katie has benefited from being in the French immersion program?

Mrs. S.:
I think it's been good because it's been challenging for her. She...I think she, personally, enjoys the French language. You know, she uses it...I think out of, between Scott and her, she uses it far more than Scott does, like singing and mimicking her teacher. That...my...I think she has, myself. I don't know what Randy feels.

Mr. S.:
Yes, it's kind of hard. You don't really have a lot to, to judge against that. I think...at her age just to go to school and be in that environment produces good results whether it's specifically the French part of it...I'm sure it made a little added dimension to it.

I:
Especially, too, when you don't have a child in the English program, it's kind of hard to say.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, you don't have too much to judge. I think she finds it challenging, like I think she enjoys the fact that she knows something different than the other kids. That's just her personality, again, but I think she enjoys being able to sing French songs when, you know, other kids around the area really can't. That...like I said, that's her personality.

I:
Does she ever try and explain to them what is different about her school or that she goes to French immersion? Do some of her playmates ever ask her?

Mrs. S.:
She'll tell people she goes to French immersion, like that's...she's not afraid to, you know, she says that, but I...she tries to teach them the songs and stuff and I know her and Jennifer will get into conversations where they'll say, 'Well, this is what I learnt today.' and Katie will say, 'Well I learnt this but it was all in French and we do it different because we're in French and learning how to speak French and you're not.' You know, it's that kind of thing, but I wouldn't say she...That clown song is one that she knew the meaning to. When she was trying to teach Joanne that, she would explain the, you know, when she was singing, like what, what it meant to her. And even myself, I was

listening because I didn't know what it meant either, so...but she explained it fairly good...the clown song, but...

I:
That's good, because it wasn't explained to them in English either. I guess through actions, they make that link between the two languages. Even though they haven't actually been given a translation they seem to be quite able sometimes to make it themselves, to know what it is in English.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, she seemed...that's good. She liked that song. She sings it all the time!

I:
We just learned it last week!

Mrs. S.:
Oh, she knows it off by heart. And like I say, she's been trying to teach Joanne that one. She'll explain to her what it meant and...

I:
Does she share a lot of her school experiences with you here at home or with her brother and sister?

Mr. S.:
We try and ask them every day what they did.

Mrs. S.:
We, I think we both make an effort to try and...we don't do it on a nightly basis as far as speaking French, but even at the supper table the kids really enjoy teaching Randy, like if he asks, you know if we say, 'OK we're going to do it in French.' or whatever at the table and he says...he'll say, 'What's this here?', if it's beans and then Scott is usually the one that will answer, then Katie will repeat it, but...we try and make a point of asking the kids every day. I do with Katie, you know, at 2:00 when I'm home, I ask her, you know, 'Well how was your day today?' and one day she'll say, 'Oh, I had a troubled day today, Mom. The kids were bugging me.' and this and that but she doesn't ever get into the activities that you do. I would never say she specifically says, 'Oh, we did this today or that today, or...' Her idea is she relates to the kids, like she'll say, 'Oh Curtis J. did this to me and so and so did this.' and that kind of speaking. I can't say she really says, 'Oh we've done this.', or...I don't know if she does with you.

Mr. S.:
Yes, if you specifically asked her like, 'What did you do in school today?'----'Well, we did this.' And if they haven't done anything out of the ordinary, it'll just be 'Well, nothing.', you know...I don't pursue it anymore.

Mrs. S.:
The one thing is the field trips is the one thing they talk about a lot. She really enjoyed the swimming and she...that was something she talked quite a bit about. She'd come home and, 'We went swimming today Mom.' and 'I did blah, blah blah.' The field trip things I think are noticeable to them. They really talk about that a lot.

I:
They're kind of out of the routine, too. It sticks in their minds.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, yes, exactly, it's special. It's special to them, I think so...

I:
Does she show you the work that she brings home?

Mrs. S.:
Oh yes, yes. It usually gets posted on the fridge there. There's, you know, there's always...she brings them home and we look at them. I wouldn't say you do so much, but I, you know, it's an automatic thing with me, you know, I'll say, 'Oh, what have you got in your knapsack?' and we'll open it up and she'll show...she always explains her paintings. That's the one thing I will say. She'll always explain to me, you know, even though I know what it is, she'll say, 'Well here's a rainbow over the house and here's the tree here and this is me and that's you.' and, you know, and she makes an explanation of what each thing is on there. I don't know why, but...

I:
It may even be, too, it's her sense of a story.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, maybe.

I:
Because I know she's very interested in writing things and stories and reading, even if it's not actual reading, but...

Mrs. S.:
Pretend reading.

I:
Often it is. I would imagine that she sees her paintings in the same kind of a way.

Mrs. S.:
Maybe, she's, you know, she always talks...that could be true because she explains them all the time, if you...if she's done something, she'll sit and say, 'Now here's a rainbow and this here is a...', you know, but I think maybe again to her too it's more like a...she likes to be the instructor or the, do you know...and maybe from her point of view that's

how she views that as I'm explaining to you what this is and, you know, that concept is probably very valid too, so...

I:
That's true. In what situations would she be most likely to use her vocabulary or songs or numbers? You mentioned that sometimes at dinner?

Mr. S.:
Yes, we'll ask...we'll say, 'Très bien' or something, you know...the little bit that I know we'll use or...well Scott has a French tape of songs so we play that in the car all the time and everybody sings along and really enjoys that.

Mrs. S.:
I would say in the car is one of the big places where it's used, the singing part, because even if we don't have a tape on the kids will sing it because all the songs Katie knows Scott knows as well so I would say in the...and at the, just in general, we're musical anyway. Like, we've always pretty well got music on. Another place is Sesame Street. There'll be times on Channel 13 she can catch Sesame Street and there'll be stuff in French on there and she'll really relate to that but...I would say I tend to use the French more than Randy does because I know a few words and I'll quite often just out of the blue, not in any particular situation, I'll be...I'll talk to them in French and, you know, it...my linguistics may not always be right but they get the concept of it and then they'll reply in French but for...as a family group I'd say the supper table, for sure. We try to make a point of...not on a nightly basis, like I say, but...

Mr. S.:
That's probably where you see it the most.

I:
What about she and Scott? Do they tend to use any themselves if they're alone?

Mr. S.:
Not so much yet.

Mrs. S.:
I can't say as I've noticed that. They would use the English I think before the French.

I:
What if they're in a school situation, like if she and Joanne are in a teacher/student role?

Mrs. S.:
Yes, then it gets used, for sure. Because her idea of an instructor is you and she will always, even with other kids, like if they, if she has a couple little girls over and they're playing school, it's the French

because that is her concept of a teacher is a French teacher so it'll always be in French, you know, like she'll do the counting in French and cross her legs like you and...she's got you down to a pat where she can...

I:
I know, it scares me! I know, you see yourself and you think, 'Oh, I didn't think it was that bad!' Does she do you? Does she play Mom?

Mrs. S.:
Yes, she does me fairly well too.

I:
It's nice to know I may not be the only one.

Mrs. S.:
No, you're not, believe me. She imitates...she's the kind of kid that likes authority, like she likes to be the...even she'll imitate Randy with Joanne. 'Do it now!', you know, and even the tone of her voice...she can, she gets that same, or tries to get that same tone of voice as what an adult would get, but...no I would say her and Scott really don't use a lot of it. Scott uses his when he's got his little friends over that come from French immersion, like when him and Randy are together, they'll talk, not a lot but they will say words in French to each other. I wouldn't say it's conversational French by any means but they will talk.

I:
On the whole, how do you feel Katie's attitude is toward learning French?

Mrs. S.:
Oh, I would say she enjoys it, myself. I certainly don't...

Mr. S.:
Yes, she's an eager pupil. I don't...I think no matter what you try and teach her, she'll get out and try and get a hold of it and figure it out right away.

Mrs. S.:
As long as she's interested. If she's not interested in it, she's stubborn. She, she'll let you know and it's tough to get her interested in something she doesn't want to do but I would say she enjoys it.

I:
Has her attitude changed at all over the course of the school year either toward school in general or toward the French language?

Mrs. S.:
I think she's to a point too like any other kid where...one thing I would say is that I think in the last part of the, say in the last

trimester she's realized that...I think the concept of going to school...I know the one day she said to me, 'How long do I have to go to school?' And I tried to explain to her, I said, 'Well, now that you've started, from now till when you're Barry's age.', which is my nephew. Like she just rolled her eyes up like, 'Oh my God.' like, you know, but I don't think she...like that's what she wanted to know though, like I think she seemed to think it was going to be maybe next year she wouldn't have to go or...and I told her, I said, 'Well, no, it's just like a job. Once you go, you go for a long time and by the time you're done, you'll be able to speak French and this, that and the other, and then she kind of, 'Oh, OK.' She didn't look overly enthused about it but...I don't think her attitude is...

Mr. S.:
No, I'd say she's an eager pupil and again it's kind of hard to...I don't think her attitude towards it had deteriorated in any way. I think she's sort of, you know, the kids always start out with a...

I:
She started out pretty keen, too, I think more than a lot them as far as being interested in learning French.

Mr. S.:
Yes, there's this big plateau of enthusiasm and I think it kind of peters a little bit as summer rolls around and that, but...I think she...

Mrs. S.:
I think she's about the same as she was when she...like you say, on an average.

Mr. S.:
She's still pretty enthusiastic about it.

Mrs. S.:
Yes she is. I don't have trouble with her in the morning and stuff as far as going she's...I did for a while there. She was tired. I don't know, mind you, Scott was the same way. I don't know what it was, whether it was just the time or what, but both of them were kind of, you know, 'Oh, do we have to go.', you know. But it wasn't just one of them. It was, like both of them were just to that stage where they were tired of it, I guess. I don't know.

I:
Was it between February to March?

Mrs. S.:
Yes, it was just before Easter break, there, or Spring break and they just seemed...

I:
Yes, that's a long stretch, and it's winter. It's dark out every morning when you're getting up. That's a tough stretch, I think for teachers and students because there are no long weekends and you can't seem to do as much.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, I don't know, they both seemed to do it. It wasn't one in particular but they got over that, now.

I:
Do you find that she's experienced any frustrations at all in learning the second language?

Mr. S.:
No, I don't think so. Like we said, she's still pretty enthusiastic about it and she realizes that she's a little different than a lot of the other kids and I think that kind of...she likes that. She likes that to a certain degree.

I:
Different from other children in the neighborhood or from other children in our own class?

Mr. S.:
No, I would say more within the neighborhood.

Mrs. S.:
Because she's basically the only little girl on this block that goes to French immersion. Well, Rebecca does, but again, I think she likes that bit of a, you know...she's a little different than the girls that she plays with all the time and that doesn't seem to bother her, you know, so...

I:
Can you think of anything that you might have done at home throughout the year that might have helped your children in school?

Mrs. S.:
I think we try and establish a routine with the kids...one thing that I think we do just as a family is we have rules that you have to follow in this house and that I think, that helps a child no matter what you say, like knowing that there's rules and you have to abide them whether it's us saying them or you. If you're told, you know, to do it then you do it, kind of thing and I think that's just something...that's just the way we're bringing our children up.

Mr. S.:
Lifestyle.

Mrs. S.:
It's our lifestyle, that end of it. We try and...

Mr. S.:
There's lots of evenings like, you know for a while...

Mrs. S.:
Randy reads.

Mr. S.:
Scott...both Scott and Katie, they...got into this kick about...Scott would bring home like a, an addition table or something, you know, 2 + 10, 2 + 13, whatever so I'd make up a bunch of them, maybe twenty questions and he'd see how many he could get right and then I'd make up some simpler ones for Katie but, you know, do the same thing. They were kind of kicking around with that for a while so, and then, like I say, I read to the kids just about every night.

Mrs. S.:
And handwriting is something else that Scott has...we practised with him for a while and when we would do that, Katie would practise her writing as well, you know, not where I would say, 'Here, try and do this.' She would do it on her own just so that she could be participating, but, no I wouldn't say that there's...

Mr. S.:
That's probably the extent of it, I think...

I:
And maybe more specifically to help them with the French?

Mr. S.:
Try and use some words whenever we can and...

Mrs. S.:
We make a thing too with the kids, like if they know a song we get them to try and teach it to us and they seem to enjoy the role reversal where, you know, they're teaching us something rather than us just being the ones teaching them things all the time, you know. If you get them...like that song she's learning, you know, if you try and sing it with them or on this French tape we've been playing it lots and trying to get the words...because they know them all. They've...Scott knows every song on that thing, you know, and Katie's getting them but she doesn't know some of the words. I don't think they understand.

I:
Not word for word.

Mrs. S.:
Word for word, no, but, you know, they enjoy the music and that, so...it is a good tape, too.

I:
Which one is it?

Mrs. S.:
I don't know.

Mr. S.:
Matt Maxwell. It's really good.

I:
He is good. Matt is the one that does that 'Frère Jacques Rock and Roll'.

Mr. S.:
It was one that was in this deal that was sent from the school...you know, buy a book in French and there was one that was this tape, music tape and Scott said, 'I want to get this tape.' and we bought it and it's excellent.

I:
This is good. We've got two others by him in the classroom. I don't happen to have this particular one but I have seen it.

Mr. S.:
It's really good.

Mrs. S.:
It is. It's an excellent tape.

I:
I recognize some of the songs. It really helps them, I think. Songs are really useful. When they start reading and they see some of the words, they've got that vocabulary in their heads.

Mrs. S.:
Back somewhere.

I:
It's like having a mini-dictionary in their heads. At least they have heard the words before. It helps them when they're sounding out the letters to know what the word is and if it makes sense or not because they know it and that really helps them. How do you feel about the immersion program in general from what you've seen so far? I know you don't have the English program to compare it to but from what you've seen with Katie and a little farther ahead with Scott?

Mr. S.:
I'm certainly happy. I think...we're satisfied with where our kids are at and...I guess we're sort of taking a wait and see attitude but I'm certainly satisfied, pleased with what I've seen so far.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, me too. I still have a few...I guess it's the same old story, you know...it's a new program, certainly out west here anyway and I think it's the kind of thing that we're not going to know whether it's been the good move or the bad move until the kids are a little bit older, like it's just a risk that you take by putting them in there, you know, and that, and in that sense I still kind of feel that way, like there's times when I think, 'Geez, you know, I hope that we've done the right thing by putting them in that.' I don't question...like I guess that's not the right way to put it. I personally feel that it's good but there's so many...you hear so many adverse things about French immersion, like you read some of these reports and it's, you know, they're telling you one thing and you read another one and it's telling you something else and it's the same as anything else, it's not a real recognized thing out here, you know, so you're kind of the underdog, I guess, to begin with and I guess you just kind of have to wait and see. I don't know, but I'm certainly pleased with the kids, like I think Scott's reading ability in English is just about as good as it is in French. He...

Mr. S.:
Oh, the fact...well this is, I think, is one benefit of reading to your kids at night is they really get, like he brought a book over here the other night, an English book, and read it in one night. I went for a trip to the city and he came in the car with me and had his book and read, so...

Mrs. S.:
And I think as an adult, that's your biggest fear, is them not being, having good command of the English language, like I'm sure that my children, being in the French immersion program, will have an excellent command of the French language but that would be your biggest fear is them not having a good command of the English.

I:
The more people I talk to with children in the higher grades, I know I haven't taught grade 1 or 2 myself, they say that even before they receive English instruction, most of them are able to make the switch quite easily. As an immersion teacher, it's nice to keep hearing confirmation of that.

Mrs. S.:
Because you do hear a lot of negative things, you know, from people and it's the kind of thing where, you know, if you don't question your judgement you're OK but when you start reading all these things and people are thinking, 'Well, geez, you know, maybe I made a mistake.', like it's not a real proven program yet. It hasn't been around ...

I:
You start second guessing yourself.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, you do, you know, not...I guess again because it's your children that you're dealing with and we both feel the same way. I mean, an education nowadays is a very important thing and I mean you'd hate like heck to look back when the kid's in grade 11 and go, 'Geez, you know, I really, I blew it.' like, but...

Mr. S.:
I think, though, if your child's a good student it's just another...French immersion is just another...

Mrs. S.:
Stepping stone.

Mr. S.:
Yes, it's a bit of a, you know, definitely learning another language is a tougher concept. The fact that, you know, if we could speak it it would make it much easier but we can't so we can't really help them a lot, like I can come home and help them with mathematics and that, but I can't really help them with French because I don't know, so it's a tough, tough concept to grab but if your child is a good student, I don't see there'd be any trouble. I mean, you know, I...the mathematics that our kids do, the reading and everything is...it's certainly a heck of a lot more than what I was like when I was in school so I don't have any fears about them not knowing the English language at all, and then I think that...they're doing pretty good with the...French end of it too.

Mrs. S.:
My dad is someone with the kids, too, who speaks a lot of French with them. He makes a real effort to...like this morning he asked Katie if she was going to school in French and she understood him. She answered him properly. She said, 'Oui' and she said she was going to work on the bus and I said, 'No, you...' She was trying to say 'travel' and she said 'travaille dans le bus' and I never corrected her and I thought of it later. I thought, 'Travaille is work. I know that' but I didn't know, you know, but she answered him right. But Dad can speak a bit of...he's like I am. He knows...some of his French you don't want to teach them. And we have a friend of ours...is from Morinville and she's French and...Lise spoke to the kids a lot that night in French as well. She was speaking to them in French and, you know...

Mr. S.:
Kind of testing them where they were at.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, yes.

Mr. S.:
Yes, we went over and visited them about a month or so ago and kind of went over there for the evening and she was chatting to them in French and stuff.

I:
Well that definitely helps.

Mr. S.:
Yes, I think that's probably the...if you've got, even the fact that Teresa, you know, has some idea, took a bit of it in school and then...that's probably what I find...it kind of makes you feel a bit helpless, you know, like for me, don't really know anything about it, where you want to try and help them so you, you know, you do it just by picking up on a little bit but I'll bet you my French is probably...improved...100% over what it was...from zero...I mean I can understand some basic phrases and stuff now and that's probably, you know...if I could be a little more educated, I'm sure I could see...make them more productive with it, but that'll have to...that'll wait, you know, it'll come in time I guess...

Mrs. S.:
And actually, it's funny because Doris, my sister, when we were over at my brother's and I came in and I said something in French. She looked at me and she said, 'Where did you learn to rattle off like that?' And I would say my French has improved with being with the children. My own, personally, because I have the general concept of it but I'm not a good conversationalist, like I get the past and present mixed up but I can read it fairly good and in that sense it's been good too because a lot of times with the kids when they're reading, their French books, like there's a couple of words that they don't understand, you know, you can, you can pronounce for them. My pronounciation may not always be right but it gives them...Scott is the one who corrects my pronounciation. If I say it, he'll say, 'No Mom, it's like this.'

I:
Close enough then at least they'll know what you mean.

Mrs. S.:
Exactly, then he can correct it as far as the accents go so that's an, you know, in that sense it helps them a little bit. I'd say mine's improved too.

I:
Do you plan for Katie to continue on in the French immersion program?

Mrs. S.:
Oh yes, definitely.

Mr. S.:
Oh sure, no doubt about it.

I:
What extracurricular activities has she been involved in this year in addition to school?

Mrs. S.:
Brownies, gymnastics.

I:
Were these all year?

Mrs. S.:
Yes.

Mr. S.:
Well the gymnastics she's been involved in that, what, a couple years?

Mrs. S.:
Two, three years, yes. Brownies this is her first year with the Brownies or Sparks or whatever they are.

Mr. S.:
Brownies, yes, that was in the fall, right?

Mrs. S.:
What else? That's about it. We allow each of the children two things because that's sufficient by the time you get through school and everything else.

I:
Did she do some theatre production? I can't quite remember what it was about.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, yes she did.

Mr. S.:
Oh yes, that was just...the deal where they had that...

Mrs. S.:
They had a travelling...

I:
Just For Fun Theatre?

Mrs. S.:
No, it was a...

Mr. S.:
It was called the Missoula Children's Theatre. It was this children's group from the States...

Mrs. S.:
From Montana.

Mr. S.:
And they came up and I guess they travel around to all the towns and they come in and, what, ten days, two weeks?

Mrs. S.:
No, a week. They put on a production.

Mr. S.:
Yes, a week, they put on a play. It was called Jack and the Beanstalk and Teresa read the advertisement in the paper that they wanted 50 local actors...

Mrs. S.:
It asked for auditions.

Mr. S.:
So we took her down there and she got a part in that.

Mrs. S.:
She got the lead part for the little kids. She was a Mexican jumping bean and she was the only one with the...

Mr. S.:
Speaking part.

Mrs. S.:
With the speaking part. And she did excellent in it. She was really...

Mr. S.:
She was really pumped up over that.

Mrs. S.:
Oh yes, and it was...

Mr. S.:
Until she was so pooped, then we had to take her to the second show.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, basically we had to bribe her to do the second one but it was very, very tough because they started on a Friday with the auditions and the play was on a Saturday.

Mr. S.:
The following Saturday.

Mrs. S.:
Two plays, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, and those kids...the first audition that they went to was four hours long and then every night afterwards they had to be there for two hours for this play. So I mean, every night right after, you know, say 3:30, she was there till 6:30 and it was tough on her because what was bad was, yes, she was

just exhausted come Saturday. The first play she did she did terrific and the second one she did fine once...we made the mistake of bringing her home and she fell asleep and we had to wake her up and she was just...like that was like going into the tiger's den, I'll tell you. You had to really...

Mr. S.:
But she really enjoyed it.

Mrs. S.:
Yes, she did and she did very well on it. She was really, she was really pumped up for it because she got to wear make-up and, you know, work with real actors and...

Mr. S.:
Go into the big high school. It was all in there.

Mrs. S.:
It was in...

Mr. S.:
In the theatre there.

Mrs. S.:
In the drama centre there.

Mr. S.:
It was pretty good. And then some of the, the gal that...she models clothes for...I guess that's an activity. She...

I:
Yes, I know she knows Tanya Nelson from...

Mrs. S.:
She models for Tanya.

Mr. S.:
So Tanya came and gave her a bouquet of flowers...

Mrs. S.:
After her performance. Well she's positive that Katie's going be the next Marilyn Monroe as far as she's concerned, you know. She thinks this kid's got talent coming out of her like, you know, and it's funny because Katie does have a very special relationship with Tanya. She really feels...she feels very comfortable with her and Tanya's very encouraging. Like she would, if that was Tanya's kid, she'd have her in theatre, in drama, in, you know, like tap dancing. She's always after me to get her involved in Just For Fun Theatre. 'She'd be a star!', you know, and she really feels she's got a lot of talent. She models for Tanya an awful lot and she's very good at that as well. She's one of those ones that you don't have to tell what to do. She gets out, she

does the turns and, you know, she always gets applause and stuff and she enjoys it, but again, she's the kind of kid, she likes being in the limelight so for her those things are all just up her alley, like she, she loved it so, well it was...yes, I never even thought of her modelling. She does that quite a bit too, on a fairly regular basis. I'd say they go once a month, once every two months, but...

I:
Do they do shows here or is it in the city?

Mrs. S.:
Oh yes, the last one they did was...they did for Secretary's Week. They did the Children's Festival...the Welcome Wagons in the city. They did the Tiny Tot one out here...the Children's Festival was probably the biggest one but that was last year and that was at the Convention Centre and it was a big, big deal. Paul Hann was there and all those guys so it was kind of neat. All the kids model actually, Scott and Joanne too but Katie is one, I think...you know, she doesn't need any direction of any sort. She's done it and she enjoys doing it so...other than that she hasn't really...she likes her gymnastics. She really likes that but...We'll see. Next year I might get her into, into tap or something. She loves dancing so I don't know.

APPENDIX C

DATE: PARTICIPANTS:

TIME:

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

COMMENTS:

DATE: PARTICIPANTS:

TIME:

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX D

DATA ANALYSIS--KATIE

The following analysis was done by myself, the primary researcher.

Personality Factors

1) Katie is rather bossy, often attempting to discipline and direct the other children in the class as well as her brother and sister.

2) Katie is strong-willed, often arguing with her mother, father or teacher in an attempt to get her own way. She does not always win out, however.

3) Katie is very verbal, talking a lot to others and to herself. She also sings a lot.

4) Katie likes to be able to do things other children can't. She likes to be in the limelight. Speaking French is one of a number of her "special skills".

Parental Factors

1) Katie's parents do not speak a lot of French but they use what they do know at home and in the classroom (mother).

2) Katie's parents seem to be concerned most about whether their children enjoy school, French, various activities, etc. They often measure success by their children's enjoyment.

3) Katie's father feels frustrated over his inability to speak French.

School Experiences

1) Katie consistently mimicks the teacher.

2) Katie has some difficulty getting along with her classmates.

3) Katie frequently communicates through writing, usually English. She has a good concept of the meaning of print.

4) Katie often "pretends" to read. She tells the story while turning the pages. This is usually a mixture of both French and English. She almost always has the book turned away from her toward imaginary or real listeners.

Home Experiences

1) Katie often plays school at home. She is always the teacher. The student may be her younger sister, a friend, a doll or an imaginary friend.

2) There is a lot of discussion at home about what is done at school.

3) Katie engages in frequent dramatic play, both at home and at school. She usually takes on the adult or authoritative role. She is often scolding or disciplining.

4) Katie helps her mom with many tasks around the house, especially baking or cleaning.

5) Katie's parents, especially Dad, read to the children frequently at home.

6) Katie likes to teach her parents things they do not know.

7) Katie is often in conflict with her older brother. She likes to compete with him, even though he is two years older than her.

French Language Development

1) While mimicking the teacher, Katie usually speaks French, the language of the teacher or at least uses some French words in English sentences.

2) French words and songs are shared at home with family members.

3) Katie uses French frequently and spontaneously in the classroom.

4) Katie sings a lot of French songs outside of school, either alone or with family members.

5) Katie sometimes uses French words she knows in the place of French words she doesn't know, even if it does not make sense, for example in a song.

6) Katie will use one or two French words in an English sentence.

7) Katie has a good auditory memory. She attends closely to what the teacher says and is able to repeat it without having to hear it frequently.

The following analysis was done by an independent reader, someone with similar teaching experience and educational background to myself.

Case Study: Katie

Recurring Themes:

From my reading of the data I find several behaviors revolve around two major themes: (1) Issues of control, (2) Issues related to self-learning

ISSUES OF CONTROL:

Relationships with other children

1. Strong willed, independent statements revolving around activities.
2. Role plays to control other children.
3. Jealous of other children.
4. Enjoys leading others, wants their recognition.
5. Wants to be right.

Relationships with adults

1. Frequent role playing of adult occupations.
2. Strong bond to teacher.
3. Strong bond to mother.
4. Strong desire to be like adults; do things they do, be in control like them.
5. Stands up to adults, feels equal to them, confident in own abilities vis à vis adult standards.
6. Strong need for recognition from adults; seems to feel more comfortable with adults than with children her own age.

ISSUES RELATED TO SELF-LEARNING:

1. Takes responsibility for own learning.

2. Initiates learning; seeks to learn from a variety of different situations.

3. Self-directs learning, actively teaches herself.

4. Uses knowledge actively (e.g. when she tries to "teach" others).

RECURRING THEMES RELATED TO KATIE'S USE OF L1 AND L2

L1

1. Expresses herself forcefully, confidently and articulately in her own language.

2. Actively seeks out language producing activities at home and school.

L2

At home:

1. Uses L2 "competitively" with brother.

2. Uses L2 to control play situations with siblings and friends.

3. Uses L2 to please mom and dad.

At school:

1. Uses L2 competitively in relation to other children.

2. L2 is strongly related to relationship with teacher; French=teacher-child relationship. Tied once again to issues of control and self learning. She feels a knowledge of French will give her more control in terms of being liked by the teacher and in terms of being in charge of others. Also her strong initiative to learn drives her to meet this new challenge and excell (i.e. she teaches herself French

independent of formal instruction, is confident enough to make good guesses and take risks).

RECURRING THEMES REVOLVING AROUND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The general theme than runs through Katie's life at home is reflected I think in an underlying assumption that Katie is a unique individual who is capable in her own right and has a responsibility to make decisions and be an active, participating member of the family. In particular, I see this attitude in the mother who never seems to feel threatened by Katie and who never imposes on the child her ideas of what a child should be like. Father seems to be a more benign figure, encouraging and supportive but not a dominant person (in this data). There seems to be an acceptance of her just as she is. Some of the patterns of behavior which demonstrate this are:

1. Allows child to participate in a wide variety of activities (e.g. sewing, making bread, baking cake etc.)
2. Responds to child's comments, requests, ideas, extends through use of language.
3. Talks often to child in situations which do not involve discipline or structure.
4. Both mom and dad are polite when making requests (e.g. please, thank you).
5. Both parents engage in specific activities focused on the children (walks).

6. Encourage language use in variety of ways (e.g. discuss stories after reading, share family event like baby born, looking at photo album, cooking, sewing, etc.)

7. Encourage child to share her outside (school) experiences.

8. Assumes the child is capable, doesn't panic if small mishaps occur.

9. Both parents seem calm, patient and accepting.

PARENTS' ATTITUDES TO FRENCH

The main theme that emerged (mostly from the interviews) is that they are happy with the French program so far! because their children have not had any major problems. I sense an underlying concern, however, that if their children were not doing well or if they were not enjoying the program they would not be totally committed. Although they both indicated in the interviews that they tried to use French at home there didn't seem to be much evidence of this in the parent journals.